

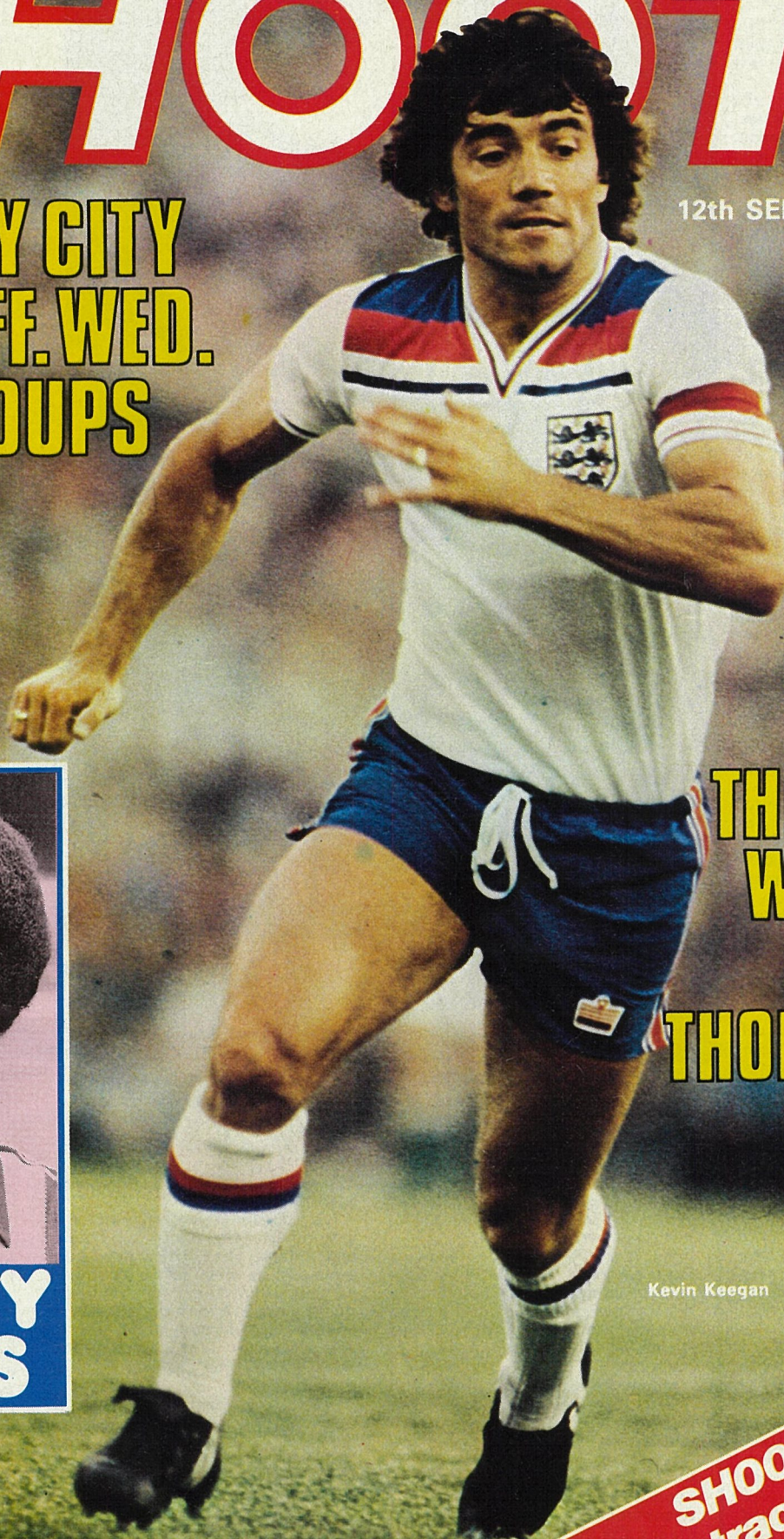
32 Adam Grese (4)

WORLD CUP SPECIAL SHOOT!

25p

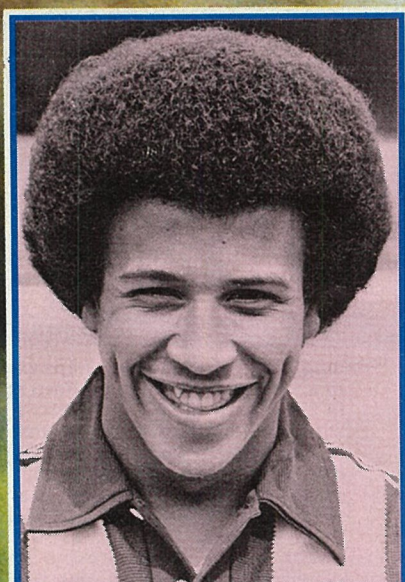
12th SEPTEMBER, 1981

COVENTRY CITY
AND SHEFF. WED.
TEAM GROUPS



Kevin Keegan

THIJSSSEN
WILKINS
SHAW
THOMPSON



MIGHTY
MOSES

SHOOT!UMBRO
tracksuit offer

Suicide squad

MIDDLESBROUGH appear to have been forced into a form of suicide by selling some of their best players in the past few months.

These are early days for wild predictions about the possible destiny of trophies in the new season, but even Boro's most ardent fans can hardly be optimistic about the next eight months.

Middlesbrough have not won a major trophy in 105 years, a "duck" they are unlikely to break in 1981-82.

By selling the midfield at the end of their contracts, the engine room of their side, and failing to plug the gaps caused by departures, Middlesbrough seem to have suffered from an acute bout of mid-summer madness.

The sale of more than £1 million worth of talent to Liverpool since January, 1978 is understood, if not wholly accepted, by the Ayresome Park fans.

SHOOT view!

Graeme Souness left with John Neal's blessing, the manager knowing that he had a host of brilliant young players to take the young Scot's place.

The sale of Craig Johnston to Anfield for £750,000 last Spring made sense, boosting the coffers again at a time when home gates were lower than 17,000.

The transfer transactions since Johnston's exit have sent shock waves through the North-East. Bobby Murdoch, Neal's successor, has lost two of the country's finest midfield players, Mark Proctor, at the end of his contract at a tribunal set figure of £425,000 to Nottingham Forest, and David Armstrong to Southampton.

Armstrong hardly played a bad game in 11 years at Ayresome.

Proctor, a former England Youth captain and local product, completed more than 100 senior games for Middlesbrough before he celebrated his 20th birthday, a tribute to his remarkable talent.

The sales of Armstrong and Proctor this summer netted more than £1 million, and Middlesbrough's bank manager is smiling.

Bosco Jankovic, a striker, has also been released at end of a contract. The prospect of Middlesbrough maintaining the progress they have made since Jack Charlton brought them back to the First Division in 1974 is remote.

Murdoch will be hoping that the work he has accomplished with Middlesbrough's prolific nursery of young talent in recent years will carry him through what promises to be the most crucial season since their return to the First Division.

The new manager's head is on the line. In balancing the books for the board of directors and forced into sales by players wanting to leave, he might have jeopardised his future.



NORWAY v. ENGLAND...OSLO



troubling summer tour when Greenwood thought about resigning. Thankfully he didn't, because if England are to reach Spain then he is the man to guide them along the still tricky route.

He's a likeable man who, despite a verbal blow-up with the Press, is liked by everyone. Indeed, if he has a weakness it's that he's too nice — soccer 1981 occasionally calls for managers to make unpleasant decisions, but Greenwood avoids such situations and England FC is a happy 'club'.

His football knowledge is second to none. Greenwood could talk for an hour on Norway, but instead of blinding his players with tactics he will talk about the Norwegian set-pieces and their danger men. He is aware that if England play to their capacity, as they did in Hungary, they will win in Oslo, bumpy pitch or no bumpy pitch.

Failed

It would be a tragedy for English football if the national team failed to qualify for the World Cup yet again. Greenwood says: "If England are struggling then it's bad for domestic football. I sense more optimism in the air now following the Royal Wedding and the Ashes victory. I hope we can keep this going through the winter."

After Norway, Greenwood will turn his attentions, briefly, to the World Youth Cup to be played in Australia.

"The youth team will hopefully provide tomorrow's stars," he says. 'People talk about how Bryan Robson has emerged as an Eng-

GREENWOOD—GLORY OR GLOOM?

RON Greenwood is almost certainly starting his last year in full-time management. After defeating Hungary in Budapest, he said: "This is the most satisfying moment in my career," a reference to the great Magyars of the 50's who shaped Greenwood's football philosophies.

In his heart, Greenwood surely knows England won't win the World Cup in Spain. That's realism, not pessimism.

But it would be a fitting end to a long career if Greenwood's England could qualify for Spain and do themselves justice. The England manager would accept glorious failure as long as it happened in style.

When he took over from Don Revie four years ago morale in the England camp was low. Greenwood now commands the same respect, in a different way, as Sir Alf Ramsey did. Sir Alf may have been a harsher disciplinarian, but Greenwood's easy-going style means the players are treated like men, and they don't abuse this

freedom. Neither are they treated like children.

It's possible Greenwood will stay on after the World Cup Finals, but unlikely. His 60th birthday beckons and he may feel he's done all he can. What the F.A. should be doing now is planning ahead; to ensure Greenwood stays on in some capacity and if Greenwood does 'retire' they are prepared for this.

For the time being Greenwood is thinking only about Norway. He has gone on record as saying England will qualify for the World Cup Finals, an uncharacteristic statement said after a night of emotion in Budapest.

There was, it has been rumoured, a time during the con-

land player, but it hasn't happened in a year. It started a long time ago in the Youth team."

As the England team assemble in a Hertfordshire hotel this Sunday they will know what's at stake. Talk to any of the 22 and they'll say they want to reach Spain for Ron.

With a new season having just kicked off, it would be nice if we had something to look forward to at the end of it all.

The players are desperate to make it to Spain — for many it will be their last chance of a World Cup appearance — and the manager is aware that he stands or falls by England's results in the next few months.

Next Wednesday in Norway Greenwood will know whether he will go out of soccer management as another England boss who failed to take his team to the World Cup Finals; or whether England are one step nearer Spain.

NORWAY v. ENGLAND...OSLO



Tony Woodcock nets for England during the 4-0 defeat of Norway at Wembley a year ago.

SAME AGAIN, ENGLAND!

RON Greenwood will rely on the men who beat Hungary in Budapest to keep England's World Cup hopes alive in Norway next week.

Bar injuries, the England manager is almost certain to select the same ten outfield players. The only question mark hangs over Ray Clemence.

Greenwood may revert to his play-one-miss-one policy and choose Peter Shilton again now that the Forest 'keeper is settled in Nottingham.

England need four points from their two remaining games to ensure qualification and with this in mind Greenwood will once again go for experience. This won't please those who want to see the younger brigade given a chance, but after the victory in Budapest the value of experience was underlined for all to see.

Although it's early in the season for such an important tie, England travel to Oslo with the knowledge they have never scored less than four goals on their previous visits to Norway.

However, Norway aren't the pushovers they were a while ago. In the current World Cup campaign they've held both Rumania and Switzerland to draws and were unlucky to lose 2-1 to Hungary.

And although the part-timers were beaten 4-0 at Wembley, they won 2-1 in Switzerland and went down in Rumania by the odd goal.

If the England players won't be properly match fit, with only three League games behind them, September is the month when Norwegian footballers are traditionally at their peak because of their summer season.

Tor Fossen, their 40-year-old manager warns: "If we beat England it will be publicised all round the world. Look at the reaction when Switzerland beat England."

"A win for Norway against England would boost our football more than any other result. It's a different game when countries like us play England — that's the price you pay for fame."

"I'll be sad if we're responsible for England failing to reach the World Cup Finals. But victory is

important to our standing in world football."

Fossen spoke about the complacency that can creep into opponents when they play Norway.

"A manager can say 100 times that we'll be difficult, but players don't always believe him. The difference in the England team that lost in Switzerland and won in Hungary was the attitude."

Ron Greenwood agrees with Fossen. "I know everyone is keener to beat us than other countries. It doesn't make life any easier for us."

'Excuses'

"The ball is in our court, though. We mustn't make excuses or worry about the rather bumpy pitch we'll be playing on. If we do this we could be 1-0 down before we know what's hit us."

"Having seen the Norwegians play Switzerland, I'd say we must be wary of their set-pieces... long throws and corners in particular. And we know from playing them at Wembley their defenders defend bravely. We mustn't panic. If we can score an early goal our task will be much easier."



England captain Kevin Keegan scores the third goal from the penalty spot against Hungary in Budapest.

GROUP 4

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| England | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 7 |
| Rumania | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| Hungary | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Switzerland | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 4 |
| Norway | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 4 |

Keegan's hope

WHILE Ron Greenwood could bow out of football at the end of the season, England captain Kevin Keegan may also be playing his last year in the First Division.

His Southampton contract expires after the World Cup and he has hinted strongly that he may end his career in the NASL.

The 30-year-old Keegan has had mixed fortunes since returning from West Germany just over a year ago. Last season he was plagued by injuries, but when fully fit showed the sparkle that has made him one of Europe's most feared forwards.

Mighty Mouse, as he was nicknamed in Hamburg, would like nothing better than to reproduce the sustained brilliance of his Liverpool days.

"I feel fit and I'm hoping for a season free of injuries," he says. "I'm looking forward to playing in my favourite position, up front. David Armstrong's arrival should enable me to do that."

"Had we not won in Hungary, myself and several members of the squad may have been finished. Now we're confident we can reach Spain."

I'VE never known the England team in better spirits as we prepare to do battle against Norway in Oslo in our penultimate World Cup qualifying game.

That 3-1 win over the so-called Mighty Magyars of Hungary in our last game has given us all a supercharged boost, wiping out the memory of our shock slump against Switzerland.

There's no complacency, a feeling that having already beaten the Norwegians 4-1 at Wembley, the two points are there for the taking. Only confidence that providing we reproduce the composure, fighting spirit and skill we showed against Hungary we should win.

I expect manager Ron Greenwood to once again rely on a side with maximum experience, and the boys of the "old brigade" are favourites to do duty again.

Written off

The likes of Trevor Brooking, who had a magic match in the Nep Stadium, Budapest, scoring two goals, my partner in defence Dave Watson, who keeps getting written off only to come back and prove he's still among the best in the business, and Kevin Keegan, a living example of perpetual motion.

Soccer statistics reckon one point from Norway and two against Hungary in our last game at Wembley will see us through to the World Cup Finals in Spain. But if we're to compete with the best teams in the world next year, then nothing less than a win can satisfy us.

If we can sustain the form we showed against Hungary we'll take four points from our remaining two games to approach the Finals in the belief we can at least finish in the top bracket.

The defeat in Switzerland taught us a valuable lesson. We concentrated too much on attack, going at the Swiss defence "bull at a gate" style, leaving ourselves wide open to counter strikes.

Against Hungary Ron Greenwood told us to be more patient, to build moves more slowly. This generally means stroking the ball about, particularly in midfield, until an opening appears and someone can either make a darting run or a front man can pounce on an accurate through pass.

I'm fortunate that the boss now allows me to play the same role as at Liverpool, acting as a twin centre-back. In the European Champion-



PHIL THOMPSON
My soccer world

ship in 1980 I played as a sweeper, but we discovered that the defence was more vulnerable and could be exploited.

I've never yet played in a competitive match in Norway, for either club or country, although Liverpool did once take part in a friendly against Trondheim, which I believe we lost 2-0.

Pitches can be very different from in Britain, where they're now at their best, due to the extremes in the weather. They tend to be bumpy with very little grass, so we'll have to watch out for some crazy bounces.

Although most Norwegians are amateurs, some of the internationals are professionals with crack sides in other countries.

As our League matches are regularly shown on TV, the Norwegians

are well up on British football and the abilities of our players, so they have an advantage. Our experience of them is limited to that one game at Wembley.

And judging by their results since, they have improved. They'll also be geed-up by the urge to do well in front of their home fans.

Beating England is still regarded as a big feather in the cap by all foreigners!

Ron Greenwood has gone on record as saying that because standards have risen so much in recent years, probably due to the spread of good coaching, there are no easy games any more at international level. So there's no chance of England regarding the Norwegians as pushovers.

Ron also said in the happy Nep Stadium dressing-room, where the



'Swiss defeat taught us a valuable lesson'

champagne flowed: "You can book your tickets for the World Cup Finals now!"

If we let him down on that promise to England fans we deserve to be put up against a wall and shot!

The Liverpool members of the party couldn't wish for harder preparation for Norway than the League match against Arsenal at Anfield this Saturday.

Marathon

The Gunners have been one of our bogey sides in recent years. When captained by Alan Ball they beat us home and away one season. Then in 1980, after a marathon of F.A. Cup Semi-Final and three replays, they went on to Wembley.

They're always stubborn, hard to break down.

Arsenal have some great players, including David O'Leary, the best centre-half in the League; Graham Rix, who this season should come out of the shadow of Liam Brady and emerge as a talent in his own right; and that veteran goalstopper Pat Jennings.

Our Kop fans, who always give a big welcome to visiting 'keepers, reserve a special one for Pat.

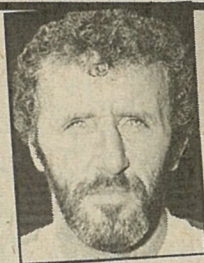
Just for once I wish they'd break with tradition. Pat is hard enough to get the ball past, without The Kop's encouragement!

Phil Thompson

'Rely on England's OLD BRIGADE'



'Kevin Keegan — perpetual motion... Trevor Brooking — a magic match in Hungary'



This week in Tartan Talk Danny McGrain turns the spotlight on the World Cup

'THREE MORE POINTS — AND WE'LL BE THERE'

THREE seems to be the vital statistic when it comes to Scotland's World Cup qualifier against Sweden at Hampden. I just hope it turns out to be a lucky number.

Three points will take us to the finals in Spain next summer. And we have three games left to get them.

But Sweden will be a hard nut to crack — especially since they have qualified for the last three Finals. However, if we do make it it will mean Scotland will be heading for the Finals — that's right, for the third time in a row!

Well, we wouldn't be at all upset if the numbers game went on its merry way and we won 3-0, but we are under no illusions about the Swedes. Beating them 1-0 in Stockholm was a tremendous result but they come to Glasgow in much better form with wins over Northern Ireland and Portugal behind them.

And they will play us at the peak of their season, just a couple of months into the second part of their term which breaks in mid-summer.

John Greig, who came to Holland to watch Celtic play Dukla Prague, had just returned from Sweden with his players and he told us that the fans over there still believe their team can qualify for Spain.

GROUP 6

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Scotland | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| N. Ireland | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 6 |
| Sweden | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Portugal | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Israel | 6 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 |

AFTER having taken only two points from the first four matches, Sweden looked out of the competition, but two straight wins versus Northern Ireland (1-0) and Portugal (3-0) has lit a flickering hope.

The chances of Sweden going to Spain are, to most Swedish critics, purely theoretical, but at least the successes have revived general interest in football among the fans.

The victories over the Irish and the Portuguese were not due to some sudden transformation of the Swedish national team. Most of the credit must go to the Swedish programme negotiators, who managed to get the opponents to meet Sweden hopelessly out of season.

For instance, the Irish hadn't played regular soccer for a month before coming to Stockholm and the Portuguese League had

Statistically of course they are right, but it is up to Scotland to put paid to their dreams at Hampden.

But there will be a lot of pressure on Scotland.

The build-up has been intense and there will be a full house at Hampden for another one of these magical atmospheric nights. On such an evening there is nothing quite like Glasgow.

Jock Stein will take on Sweden with a team of experienced players, and he is dead right. Now is not the time to make changes and he will back the men who have taken Scotland this far.

It will be all about players who

can take pressure on the big nights, for Sweden will be all out for an all or nothing effort.

But the big game diary doesn't end there. Next week (Sept 16) we begin our European Cup campaign — and what a start. Italian Champions Juventus at Parkhead.

I was a worried man when I heard the draw at first, but I feel a lot more confident for Celtic's chances now. That is because of our triumph in the Feyenoord tournament in Rotterdam at the end of July.

As I mentioned earlier in this Tartan Talk, John Greig came to watch us beat Dukla and I hope he learned enough to help Rangers do



Gordon Strachan (dark shirt) scores in Stockholm

Swedes flatter to deceive

finished more than three weeks before the World Cup date.

So while their players had holidays on their minds the Swedes were in full swing with about two months gone of the 1981 season.

Make no mistake, Sweden were well worth the two wins and at least against Portugal the team played with a lot of confidence.

Sweden also got a couple of lucky breaks, but manager Lars Arnesson only said: "We deserved them after last season when everything went against us."

Though he has used 26 players in the six internationals played so far this year, Arnesson has a settled squad which once again

shows that he was put in charge a year too late, taking over from Georg Ericson at the beginning of 1980.

However, the team still lacks imagination in the build-up, hasn't much sting up front and it's difficult to see how they will make any impression at Hampden.

Of the team that played Scotland a year ago, only four (Borg, Sjöberg, Peter Nilsson and Ingemar Erlandsson) will appear in Glasgow and they, together with sweeper Bo Börjesson, are the only ones with international backgrounds. The rest are young newcomers.

Unfortunately Sweden's most brilliant player, 27-year-old Torbjörn Nilsson from IFK Göteborg, has decided not to play for Sweden anymore.

There's no animosity involved it's just that Torbjörn (21 caps — 8 goals) very seldom reproduces his splendid form when playing for Sweden and he says he has had enough of those kind of pressures.

Someone who may show up at Hampden is Ralf Edström, currently in France with Monaco. That however will depend on Ralf's form closer to the date.

a job against the Czechs in Prague and at Ibrox.

Local rivalry is one thing, but I wish the idiots who went crazy at the end of the last Old Firm Cup Final could have seen the laughing and joking between the Celtic players and John in our hotel in Holland. We want Rangers do as well in Europe as Greig wants Celtic to go through.

Juventus can't fancy playing us too much — Bettega, Brady and all — and we are especially eager to make that Quarter-Final stage because it makes it a long winter if you are knocked out in the First or Second Round.

Good wingers

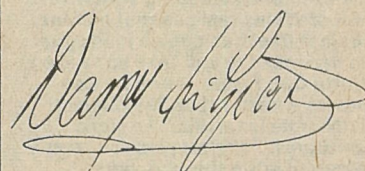
As far as Rangers are concerned I think they can beat Dukla, because they have good wingers, as we have, and the Czechs were weak against these tactics.

But whatever way you look at it Scottish football needs a boost and none could be better than the double edged glory at club and international level.

And eight vital days will tell us a lot about Scotland's immediate future in the world rankings. I have my fingers crossed although I know luck will have little to do with it for either Scotland or the Old Firm teams who are reputedly such bitter rivals.

I am convinced we can do well. After all, three is a lucky number.

See you in two weeks.




Ingemar Erlandsson



CZECHOSLOVAKIA v. WALES...Prague

GROUP 3

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Wales | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 9 |
| Czechs | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 6 |
| USSR | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 5 |
| Iceland | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 18 | 2 |
| Turkey | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 13 | 0 |



Action from Wales' victory over the Czechs at Cardiff last November.

'MOST CRUCIAL GAME OF OUR LIVES'

SAYS MIKE ENGLAND

MANAGER Mike England sums up the World Cup cause of Wales in one sweeping sentence. "All of Wales realises that a point against Czechoslovakia in Prague on Wednesday will take us to the World Cup Finals — and no one knows it better than the players!"

"Morale is terrific," England continues. "The players are keenly aware of what this prospect means for Wales as a nation and for themselves in their careers."

"Welsh success has been very good for my players over the last 12 months. Peter Nicholas has gone to Arsenal from a struggling Crystal Palace; Paul Price has rocketed into the Spurs side when most people reckoned that he could spend all his career at Luton; Dai Davies is back in the First Division with Swansea just when it seemed that his chance had gone."

Wales have been to Prague three times: they have yet to score a goal, losing 0-2 in 1957, 0-1 in 1971 and 0-1 in 1978. But three times out of four, they have beaten the Czechs in Wales, with the most recent — at Cardiff last November — launching them towards the World Cup Finals with a glaze of optimism.

David Giles scored that all important goal, but the main Wales strike threat in Prague will again come from Ian Walsh, British football's busiest marksman with seven goals from his first 12 internationals.

"I'm sure that I will get my chances in Prague," he says. "If we go to play for a point, we would be locked into a tactical plan which

could backfire on us. Mike England preaches positive football and that is why we have done so well."

"Although we won at Ninian Park, we know that the Czechs are a very fine side. Balls played to feet through the middle get nowhere because of their very efficient man to man marking. It is far more likely to pay off for us if we go to the flanks."

"The goal that gave us victory in November came from Mickey Thomas using the touchline and then we were without Leighton James because of injury."

'Weakness'

"Two of them operating together must open up a chance or two in the air — because that is where there seemed a possible weakness when we beat them in the first leg."

Although Walsh lacks the John Toshack height, the spring of this natural athlete makes him formidable in the air and his heading makes him a worthy successor to the Toshack-Ron Davies-Wyn Davies era.

"No Welsh side has ever gone to such an important game with such a record: six wins and two draws from eight matches. To do justice to that record and prove beyond doubt that this is the finest Welsh squad of all time, we MUST reach Spain," says England.

Never has so much hinged on one Wales international as next Wednesday evening's mighty clash in Prague. A draw should be enough to take them to Spain, two points will almost guarantee it...

Czechs fear Walsh's power

A VICTORY for Wales would probably clinch a place in Spain for them, but on paper at least, the odds are stacked against them.

Neither Wales nor any other national team from Britain has ever beaten the Czechs in Prague!

The Welshmen have one thing in their favour, though, for the Czechs have never been happy playing against the tougher tackling, better in the air, British teams. Ian Walsh, in particular, could cash in on this.

Their record since 1945 underlines this. In this period the Czechs have played away to England, Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland twelve times with a miserable record: won 1, drawn 1, lost 10 and a goals tally of 8 for 21 against. But at home in the same period the Czechs have won 7, drawn 1 and lost only 1 for a goals tally of 16 for and 6 against.

The Czech's psychological thing about British teams is underlined by their 3-1 defeat away to Eire in the Spring. For in Prague the Czechs have hammered Eire by 7-1, 3-0 and 4-1 since the War.

When Czechoslovakia lost 1-0 to Wales at Cardiff almost a year ago they played excellent football on the counter attack. But they fell down in finishing. Playing with only two strikers, Zdenek Nehoda and Marian Masny, the pair hardly ever ventured inside the Welsh penalty area.

At home, they will play three in

attack, but the strength of his team is in defence and particularly in midfield, where Panenka will be a key man.

Manager Dr. Jozef Venglos must choose three from four in midfield: Jan Kozak (Dukla) 27 years, 47 caps; Antonin Panenka (SC Rapid Vienna) 32, 53 caps; Jan Berger (Sparta) 26 years and 6 caps, and Premysl Bicovsky (Bohemians) who is 30 with 32 caps.

Getting goals is the Czech problem, though they appear strong up front. If Venglos goes for experience he will name Vizek, Nehoda and Masny.

Right winger Ladislav Vizek (Dukla) is 26 with 26 caps. Nehoda (Dukla) is the most capped Czech player of all time, now 30 with 77 caps and 29 international goals. Masny (Slovan Bratislava) is 31 with 70 caps, a right winger for his club who plays on the left to accommodate Vizek.

It seems that Nehoda and Masny have lost interest in playing for Czechoslovakia. Perhaps this is because after helping to win the 1976 European Championship, most of that team have been allowed to go abroad and make real money as professionals. But the F.A. felt they were needed and have refused them permission to go.

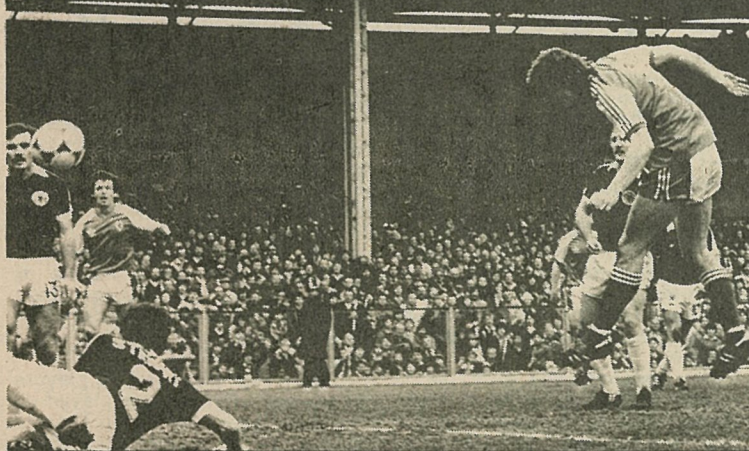
Best

Goalscorers are not easy to find in Czech football, and the old guard did best in the 30 match First Division programme last season.

Masny was the highest Czech scorer with 16 goals; Nehoda got 12, Kozak nine and Vizek seven, while Berger got only one.

Venglos has two big problems. First the Czech rules do not allow anyone to play in the First Division until they are 18. Then they have to do two years Military Service. So the Czechs are in their early twenties before they get a regular game in Division One and are usually about 24-25 before they get capped. Then by the time they have adjusted and become good they have only two or three years at their best in international football.

The aerial power of Welsh striker Ian Walsh is sure to trouble the Czechs.





HOLLAND v. REP. of IRELAND... Rotterdam

HOLLAND, runners-up in the last two World Cup competitions, will do well just to qualify for next year's final stages.

That's the view of Ipswich midfielder star Frans Thijssen, whose displays for the Suffolk club earned him a recall to the Dutch national side.

He wore the famous orange shirt in last year's European Championship in Italy and has brought his total of senior caps to 14 as a regular in the squad ever since.

But 29-year-old Thijssen, the current Footballer of the Year, acknowledges the odds are against him appearing in Spain next summer.

"Yes, it is going to be very difficult for us," he admits. "But we have to be positive and we cannot even afford to think about not beating Eire. We have to win both points and then look at the situation."

"Eire are a useful side. They have some very good players who all work hard for each other. And they

have already beaten us 2-1 in Dublin so we know what to expect.

"But as long as we have a chance we will fight. The change of manager has been good for the side. Kees Rijvers has recalled some of the experienced players and this has given us fresh hope."

"At one point the situation looked even worse. After our disappointing show in Italy a lot of

to play in the World Cup Finals," he says. "That is enough to motivate us after the disappointment of being left out three years ago."

"The trouble is that even if we beat Eire we still have a lot to do because our other games are at home to Belgium and away to France, the two favourites to qualify."

"But the spirit in the squad has improved in the last two or three

Thijssen dare not think of defeat

changes were made but Jan Zwartkruis, the previous manager, pushed too many young players in."

Thijssen was one of the Dutch players left behind in 1978. Along with his Ipswich colleague Arnold Muhren, he was named in a squad of 40 but neither of the pair were in the final party of 22 that made the trip to Argentina.

"Both Arnold and I are the same age so this must be our last chance

games and anything can happen. France still have to visit Eire and they could be in for a shock there. "There's a lot of pride at stake for the Dutch after doing so well in previous competitions. Maybe we won't make the Final again, but just qualifying would be something of an achievement."

"It will also be a great way to end an international career."



IT would be understating the fact to say that Eire have to win next week's game against Holland in Rotterdam. In fact, they must also take two points from their last game at home to France next month to retain any hope of qualifying from Group Two.

On the same evening as Eire's dreadful away record is put to the test once again, the two favourites to qualify from this group — Belgium and France — meet in Brussels.

When the sides met in Dublin last September, Eire came from behind for a memorable 2-1 win. Simon Tahamata gave the Dutch an undeserved lead, but late goals by Gerry Daly and Mark

Eire's last chance

Lawrenson had the Lansdowne Road crowd in ecstasy.

Holland have improved since then, and with new manager Kees Rijvers in charge are not without a chance of qualifying themselves.

Eire manager Eoin Hand, still looking for his first competitive away win, has not had a good preparation.

Eire's only outings since that unfortunate defeat by Belgium last March was a mini-tour last May.

Hand claims that his under-strength squad were mentally unfit in the 3-0 defeats by West Germany 'B' and Poland.

He rightly points out that Eire have had very bad luck in his two away World Cup games. The Eire manager's view is that in football luck levels out — so here's hoping that the Irish get a fair deal from the appointed referee, who is from Czechoslovakia.

Eoin dismissed suggestions that Steve Heighway, now with Minnesota Kicks in the NASL, would not figure in his plans. He points out that Steve has played

some of his best international football in this latest World Cup series.

This, really, is Eire's last chance. Thousands of fans will be going Dutch, they might as well enjoy themselves because it looks very much like they will not be going to Spain next year. However, the manager is confident and the fans live in hope.



GROUP 2

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Belgium | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 9 |
| Rep. Ireland | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 7 | 7 |
| France | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 3 | 6 |
| Holland | 5 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| Cyprus | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 25 | 0 |

Liam Brady goes close against the Dutch at Lansdowne Road last September.

Berwick manager Frank Connor has been recruiting during the close season and now has 32 players to call on.

.....

PAUL ELLIOTT, the boy who never really thought he would make a footballer, could be playing for the England youth team next season.

England youth team manager John Cartwright has been watching the 17-year-old Charlton centre-half and must have been impressed with him.

Lewisham-born Paul says: "I never really excelled as a player and I was approaching 16 before I realised I had some football talent."

"Charlton took me on and switched me from the right wing to centre-half. That was late last year and ever since then I have made progress."

Mackay's rod of iron

DUNDEE manager Donald Mackay wants his team to play it by the rules next season, both on and off the field.

Newly promoted to the Premier Division, the Dens Park men have been issued with a set of rules they must obey.

Boss Mackay lists six deadly sins:

- No player may own a motor bike
- No players should go ice skating
- No discos three days before a game
- No golf three days before a game
- No socialising at all two days before a game
- No retaliation, dirty play or dissent

He says: "The players know how far they can go. If they overstep the mark they'll be fined and if they do it again they'll be suspended."

"I'm not saying our players are the bad boys of Scottish football but I want to tighten up on discipline. If we get it right through the week we should get it right on match days too."

NULTY FACES HARD TIMES

FORMER Newcastle United and Everton midfielder star Geoff Nulty wants to become a manager.

Sacked by Everton when Howard Kendall moved to Goodison, Nulty has attended a management course at St. Helens.

Says Nulty: "Terry Venables, David Webb and Roy McFarland are just three ex-players who took the course and later became managers. If I can follow in their footsteps I'll be delighted."

But Nulty is well aware that landing a job as a manager will be difficult.

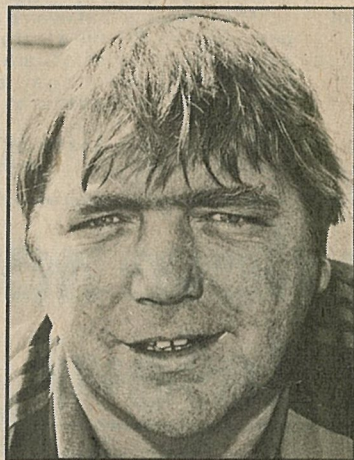
"Opportunities for me would have been more likely to turn up if I had still been able to play," says Geoff. "For example, I was interviewed by Carlisle over a year ago. They were interested in having me as a player-boss, but my injury against Liverpool shortly after cancelled out any plans."

"When Everton's new manager, Howard Kendall, took over, he told me that he was bringing his own staff to Goodison — he said he was sorry, but I would have to go."

Now, Nulty is starting from scratch in his efforts to re-establish himself in football.

The former midfielder star earned a healthy reputation last season as Lee's right-hand man, and it is well known that the Everton players had a great regard for his ability in his new role as number two.

'IT WAS ROBBERY' says Murdoch



MIDDLESBROUGH reckon they were robbed when the Football League tribunal instructed them to sell Mark Proctor to Nottingham Forest for £425,000.

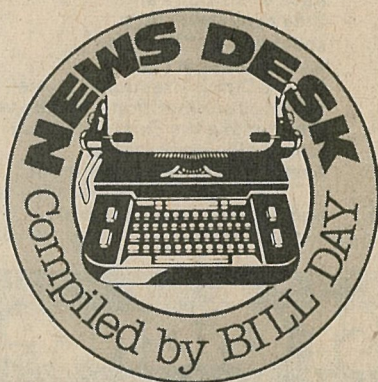
New manager Bobby Murdoch reckons Proctor was a "better player" than Craig Johnston, who was released to Liverpool for £650,000.

Murdoch groans: "The fee decided by the tribunal was well below my valuation."

Forest manager Brian Clough had kept tabs on Proctor since his short spell in charge of the England Youth squad in 1978.

Proctor, former Middlesbrough and Cleveland County schoolboy player, captained the England Youth side and has since impressed at England Under-21 level.

Forest will have to pay an extra £75,000 if Proctor, aged 20, wins three full England caps.



ROBERTS' AGONY

THERE is no shortage of hard luck stories in football this season with so many players out of work — but Dave Roberts has been hit harder than most. Just when it seemed that he had won his battle against years of pain, his world collapsed.

"I was just as thrilled as the day I won my first cap when I was appointed to a player-coach post at Swindon with a special responsibility for young reserve players" says the former Wales central defender. "Then the club called it off after x-rays had revealed two fractured metal screws in my back."

"It left me stranded. I had taken my cards at Cardiff to accept the Swindon job, gone off on holiday... and then returned with a sun tan but no work!"

Dave, formerly of Fulham, Oxford, Hull and Wales, explains: "Those screws were inserted to hold together a bone graft at the base of my spine until the healing process was complete. It worked perfectly and I proved that by returning to first team football at Cardiff."

"After living with a back problem for several seasons, at last it seemed that all my problems were over. Then came the blow at Swindon and it was something out of the blue. The screws had done their job and were no longer serving a purpose."

Dave has worked hard over the last three years by taking all the coaching qualifications and attending every possible management course. Now, Norwegian club Væggø could be the club to snap-up this dedicated professional.



Banks' Back. Sheffield Wednesday manager Jack Charlton invited his ex-1966 World Cup colleague Gordon

Banks to come out of retirement to visit Hillsborough to coach the club's goalkeepers. Gordon, born in Sheffield, once played for Sheffield Boys.

McCall for Muhren

IPSWICH manager Bobby Robson has rewarded utility player Steve McCall with a four-year contract.

McCall, who will be 21 in October, played in 48 of the club's 66 competitive games and won a UEFA Cup medal last season. Then he rounded off the season with his first international honours, England Under-21 caps against Switzerland and Hungary.

Although most of his first team appearances have been at full-back Robson has already pencilled in McCall's name to replace Dutch midfielder star Arnold Muhren, whose contract expires next summer.



The Doc attacks big spenders

A FEW years ago the transfer market went crazy. Then when, to quote Tommy Docherty "Malcolm Allison spent all the money in England", things seemed to be returning to sanity. Recent events suggest we could be going back to the bad old ways again.

"It's looking that way," says Docherty, who knows a thing or two about spending clubs' money.

"The transfer business is getting out of hand. Players' demands are out of order. They deserve what they can get, but too many are signing a contract and then asking for even more money."

With Preston, The Doc doesn't have much money to spend.

"Ron Atkinson has it all," he joked. "I'll be wheeling and dealing in the lower Divisions, relying on our youth policy to produce young players."

"There's more stability in this type of situation and a manager is judged more on his merits."



England Under-21 star Mark Proctor, who recently moved from Middlesbrough to Forest.

MILESTONE for Walsall defender Colin Harrison. He took over in goal for ten minutes when apprentice 'keeper Paul Hayward went off with concussion in a pre-season friendly. Colin, 35, has now played in every position for The Saddlers in a remarkable career.

Villa slip

ASTON VILLA were not the favourite club of the photographers who were requested to attend the Champions' photo-call at the Bodymore Heath training ground.

When the photographers arrived they discovered that there was a match in progress and they would have to wait to take their pictures.

They were then expected to take pictures of players who were obviously more interested in taking a bath instead of having their photographs taken on a warm afternoon.

Black mark Villa for the inconsideration to the photographers.

Pele's long memory

THE famous Pele proved recently that he never forgets a face.

The former Brazilian star was in New York at a party for members of the Escape to Victory cast when he bumped into an old rival.

Celtic were staying in the same hotel while taking part in the Transatlantic Tournament which also involved Cosmos, Seattle Sounders and Southampton.

Parkhead assistant manager John Clark was in a crowded hotel lift when Pele spotted him. "Glasgow, number six," said the world number one.

It was a reference to 1966 and the friendly clash between Scotland and Brazil at Hampden Park when the pair were on opposite sides in a 1-1 draw!

Tribute to Wolves

SEVERAL Wolves first team players declined to make a trip to Ireland recently.

Instead they played for the reserves while their colleagues were treated "like royalty", according to manager John Barnwell.

Sir William Jenkins, the Linfield chairman, said: "Wolves did a marvellous job in coming to Belfast. We shall be forever grateful."

"My hope is that they will come again, possibly in mid-season, to play us in a floodlit game."

Wages £15,000 plus at Grimsby

GRIMSBY TOWN manager George Kerr earns LESS than 12 of his players. Most of the first team squad had a rise before the start of the season, but even though Kerr took Town to the brink of Division One last season — and promotion in two successive years — his salary remains the same.

Apparently, Kerr earns £15,000 a year. Chairman Dick Middleton says: "The last time George asked for an increase he got £8,000. We'll see how things go during the season."

Meanwhile, at relegated Hull City all but one of the players have had a wage cut. Manager Mike Smith and the coaching staff have had their earnings trimmed, too.

"Everyone on the playing side must accept some of the blame for our decline," says Smith.

The odd man out is striker Ian Edwards, who's on a weekly contract. The Welsh international says: "I've scored a lot of goals and don't deserve a drop in salary."

Briefly

● Paddy Mulligan will not be linking up with his old boss Ronnie Allen at West Brom. Mulligan, unhappy in Greece, could return home to Eire.

● Former Eire international goalkeeper Pat Dunne, who quit struggling Shelbourne last season, has been appointed manager of Bray Wanderers. Bray is the home town of another former Eire 'keeper Alan Kelly. And already on their staff is former Eire manager Mick Meagan.

● Former Spurs player Alfie Conn has signed for his sixth British club. The former Rangers, Celtic and Hearts forward, who spent last season with Blackpool, has been signed by Motherwell.

● Hearts have added Newcastle-born defender Brian McNeill to their growing English contingent at Tynecastle Park. McNeill (25), formerly with Bristol City, was released by Plymouth at the end of last season.

● Sheffield Wednesday's teamsheet when they played

a friendly match against the Nigerian National side contained the names of Gary Bannister (ex-Coventry) and Gary Megson (ex-Everton). It could be a good omen because the last time those surnames appeared in a Wednesday team captain Keith Bannister and Gary's father Don Megson — the team won promotion to the First Division!

● Ulster referee Alan Snoddy is the baby of international soccer. At 25, the Irish League official is currently the youngest referee on the F.I.F.A. list.

Tony Godden rows with Albion

THE decision of West Bromwich Albion goalkeeper Tony Godden to seek a transfer came as a big surprise, but the consistent number one is upset by his current terms at The Hawthorns.

This is nothing new for Godden. He had a similar problem twelve months ago and it was resolved on the understanding that his new contract would be considerably improved.

Unfortunately, according to Godden, this has not transpired.

He said: "I'm not asking for the moon. All I am asking for is the average wage at The Hawthorns."

"I've had one loyalty bonus in six years and now I'm informed the club no longer make this payment."

"All I want is to be put on a par with the rest of the players. I am sick and tired of being treated as the poor relation."



JOHN MCPHAIL, Sheffield United's tough centre-half, says of new manager Ian Porterfield: "He has quickly got the boys in the right frame of mind. He has instilled club and team discipline without introducing any petty new rules and that has won him instant respect."

MOORE'S AVAILABLE

FORMER England World Cup hero Bobby Moore will consider any offer in an attempt to break into management.

"I'm prepared to consider any offer, though one is unlikely to come along with so many managers out of work."

Moore, 40, managed non-League Oxford City, but he still awaits his first job in full-time management.



ROKER JOKER. Two faces of Sunderland's Sam Allardyce, who turned up at the First Division club's photo call wearing a mask. His team-mates joked: "The mask improves your looks, Sam."



DON'T MISS NEXT WEEK'S SENSATIONAL FREE GIFT
MORE DETAILS ON PAGE 47.

A DRAW in Brazil's famous Maracana Stadium could help England to win in Norway next week. Apparently the pitch in Oslo is poor . . . bumpy and uneven.

Without doubt the worst pitch I've ever played on was the one at the Maracana. The grass was ankle-length, with tufts of coarse grass everywhere, quite out of place with the glamour and history of the stadium.

When we drew 0-0 with Brazil four years ago we just put the bad pitch out of our minds and got on with the job in hand, and that's what the lads will do next week.

They'll be experienced enough to know you have to face all sorts of obstacles away from home and if we have to play on a bumpy surface, then we'll accept this.

Ron Greenwood went for experience in Hungary and the move paid off.

The back-four of Phil Neal, Phil Thompson, Dave Watson and Mick Mills, with Ray Clemence behind them, stayed cool under pressure.

In midfield, Bryan Robson, Terry McDermott, Steve Coppell and Tre-

vor Brooking were always in control.

And in attack, Paul Mariner led his line superbly, supported by Kevin Keegan.

Having achieved such an important result under testing circumstances, chances are it'll be a very similar line-up in Oslo.

I doubt if I'll play in Norway. It would possibly be unfair on the 11 who started the game in Budapest if the side were changed. That win kept England's World Cup hopes alive when, in some people's eyes, they were dead.

It would be true to say that probably all the players feared the worst at one time or another during that long week (it felt like a month) between the game in Switzerland and Hungary.

But those moments soon passed,



**RAY
WILKINS**

Writes for you

because the spirit in the squad has always been high and we have the traditional English quality of fighting against the odds when our backs are to the wall.

I'll go on record and say England will qualify for the World Cup Finals. I believe we're good enough to win in Norway and beat Hungary at Wembley.

While taking nothing away from England, Hungary were a poor team. One of the poorest I've seen playing at home in a game which, had they won could have secured their ticket to Spain.

Attitude

Only the little Toroksic had the enthusiasm and attitude one would expect from a side battling for its World Cup future.

The Norway manager Tor Fossen says the main difference in the England that lost in Switzerland and the one that won in Hungary was attitude. He's probably right.

When we went on tour we understandably felt Switzerland would be easier — easier, not easy — than Hungary. It didn't work out that

way, but when does football work the 'right' way?

There will be no over-confidence or complacency when we play Norway. The situation is clear-cut: England must win. I just hope Norway, who have no World Cup future to play for, don't decide to sit back and try for a draw.

They have nothing to lose and playing defensively would be silly. Why not have a go and try to win? I remember Denmark adopted a positive action against us in Copenhagen not too long ago and came within a whisker of beating us in a 4-3 thriller.

The win in Hungary didn't suddenly make England a great team, just as we weren't as bad as some critics were making out. There was a lot of ill-feeling in this respect — what upset the players was not so much Press criticism, but the 'stick' handed out by people who have played the game and should know better.

Those who have experienced World Cup football know what it's like and it was sad to hear some of the things said. Still, with a new

'ENGLAND WILL QUALIFY FOR SPAIN'



season I hope we can wipe the slate clean and start afresh.

It's early in the season for a World Cup-tie, but the Hungary victory will ensure all the players are charged up and eager to play.

Ron Greenwood will keep the pressure off us in his usual way. When things go wrong he soaks up all the blame himself.

Reflection

I'd like to think that if I won't be in the team I'll be amongst the subs again, fully aware that any success for England is a reflection on the entire squad.

Before Norway, United have a date with Ipswich at Old Trafford. We beat them 2-1 on a muddy pitch in the corresponding fixture last season, after they looked as if they were going to take us apart in the early stages.

And despite what you may have read, I'm not unhappy at Manchester United, nor do we dislike living in the area. Bryan Robson? My attitude to Bryan has been that if he joins United then I hope to be playing so well Ron Atkinson can't let me go. I'd look forward to playing alongside one of the best young players in the country.

Join me again in a fortnight,

Ray Wilkins

"Spirit in the England squad has always been high, and our win in Hungary has charged us all up."



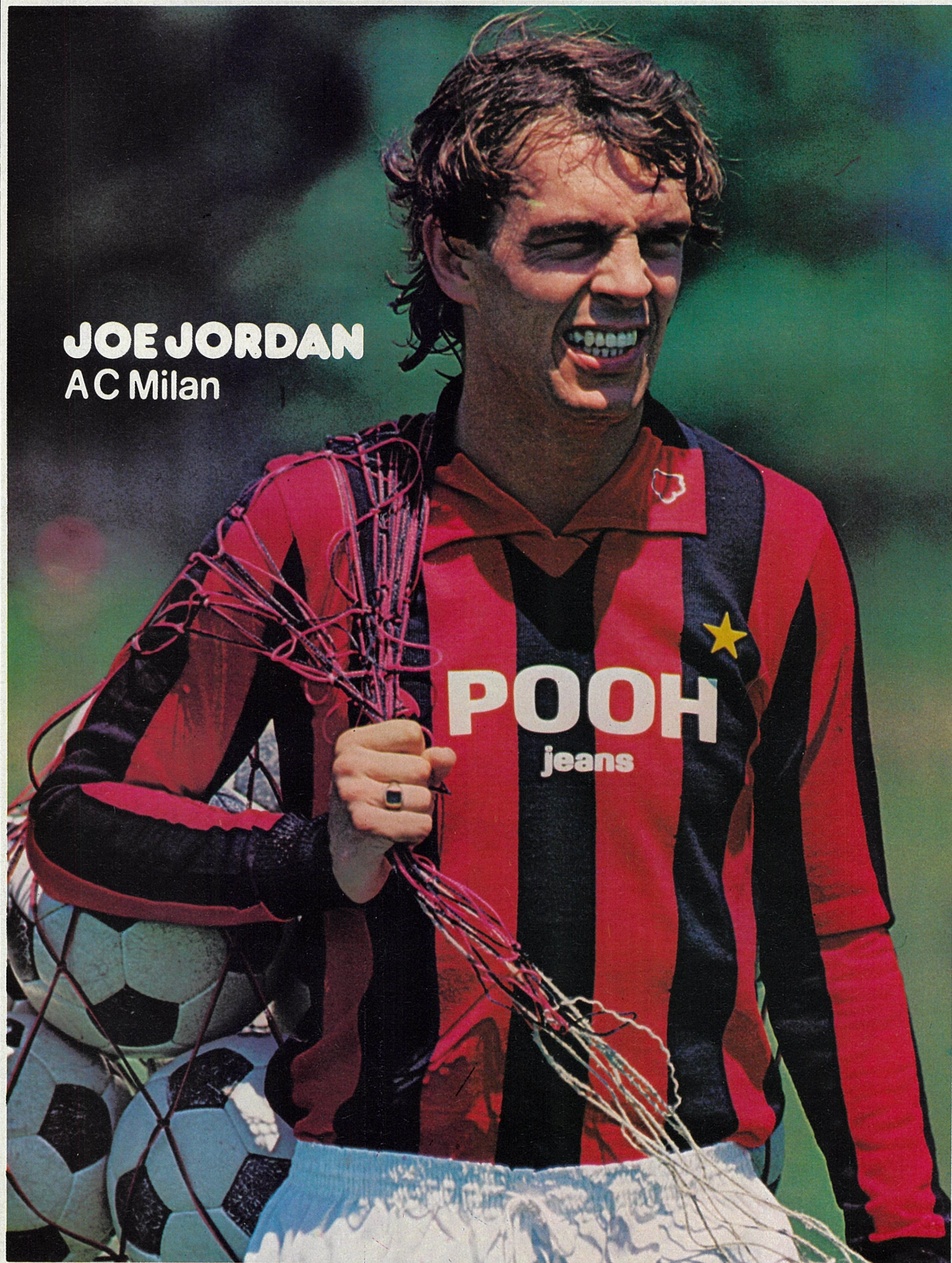
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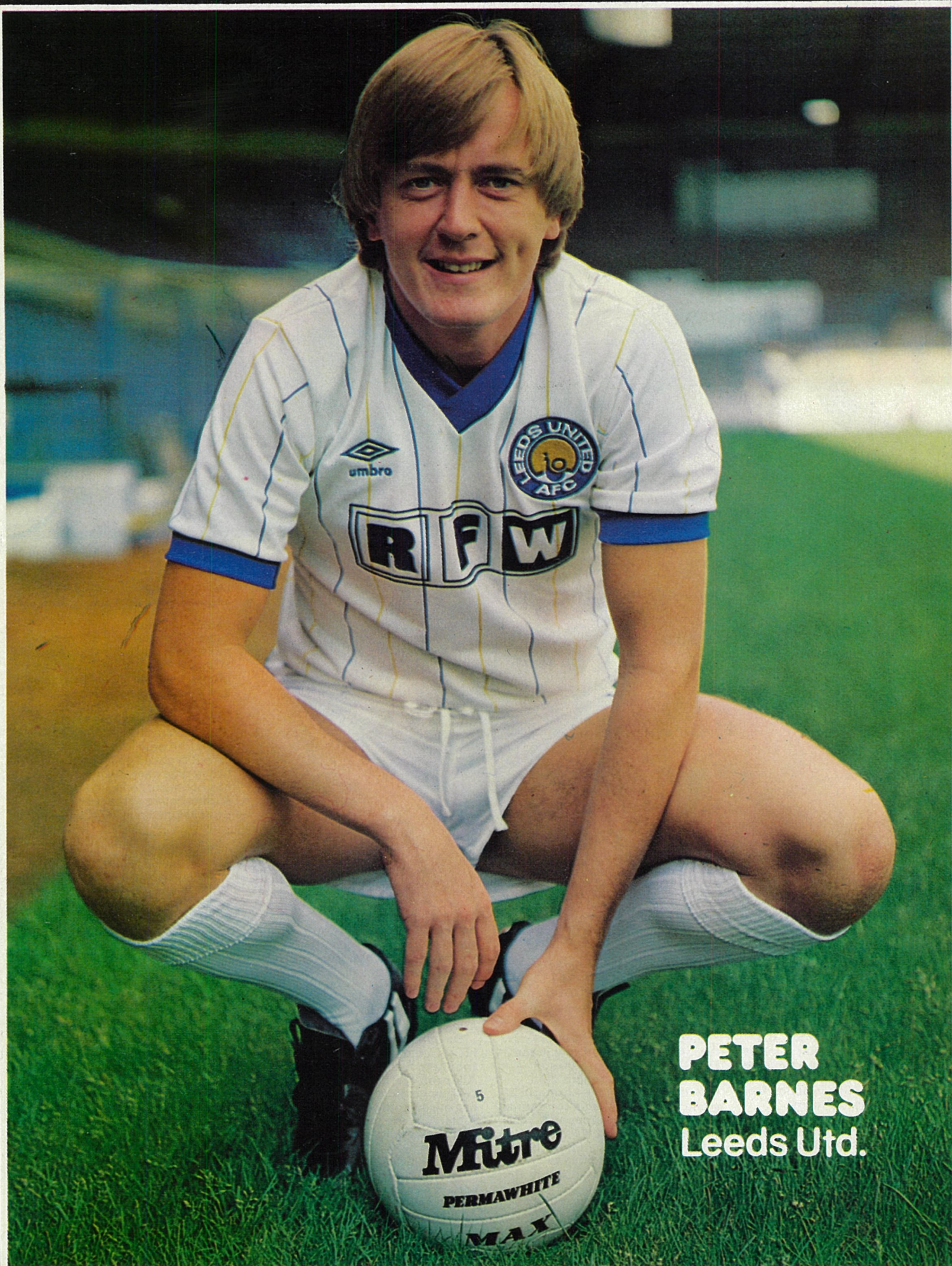
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REMI MOSES

Ally Robertson, Albion's defender, says every team should have a Moses.

"He runs and runs and runs..." Others reckon Remi has the attributes to become another Alan Ball.

Ron Atkinson certainly thought so in the 1979-80 season when he tried four players in Albion's number four shirt. Tony Brown, nearing the end of a long and great



Moses in typically aggressive action as he tackles Switzerland's Hanspeter Zwicker during an Under-21 international appearance.

-the 'mouse' who roars

"YOU'D expect him to be brilliant with a name like that..." Terrace humour for those marvelling at the stunning progress of Remi Moses.

The brilliant young West Bromwich Albion midfield player might not yet have grasped the technique of walking on water in his 34 months as a professional player, but he has already done enough to suggest that he is heading for a full England cap.

If ever a "mouse roared", it is Moses. The quietest player in the Albion squad becomes a tiger once he pulls on boots and shorts at the Hawthorns or while in action for England's Under-21 team.

He would not argue that he is the least conversational player in the Albion dressing room with sweat dripping from his back at ten to five on Saturday afternoons.

While big John Wile holds court with his players around him, Remi prefers to reflect quietly on a game, allowing his speed of foot, tenacity in the tackle, eye for a goal and running power to speak volumes.

Remi's staggering form in Albion's valiant effort to win the First Division title last season — they came fourth behind Villa, Ipswich and Arsenal — brought a smile to Ronnie Allen's sun-tanned face as soon as he stepped across the threshold at the Hawthorns this summer to herald the start of his second term of office as manager in succession to big Ron Atkinson.

For it was Allen who spotted Remi from a large group of schoolboys invited to the Hawthorns in their holidays in 1977.

Remi was quiet in those days,

but the 15-year-old arrived at Albion with glowing tributes from the club's Northern scout.

Allen plucked him from the pack and on July 4 that year, Remi, born in Manchester, signed apprentice forms. Sixteen months later Ron Atkinson, who succeeded Allen, asked Remi to sign pro forms.

On January 26, 1980, Remi made his debut at Crystal Palace. It is a tribute to his skills that since Atkinson drafted him into the League game at Selhurst Park he has missed only one match, Albion's home game against Manchester City in October last year.

He has played three times for England Under-21's and is almost certain to win another cap this week against Norway.

Unlike some young players who burst on the scene and win rave reviews, Remi has gained the respect of his team-mates and other First Division players.

career, had lost pace; John Trewick played well but not well enough; David Mills was more of a striker than a midfield man; and Moses beat the lot of them to win a regular first team place.

Remi, now aged 20, suffers none of the problems that seem to affect young professionals. The high wages he now receives are carefully saved as he continues to live in digs near the ground, and he has no desire to "live it up" in the Midlands like some less professionally minded players.

Talent

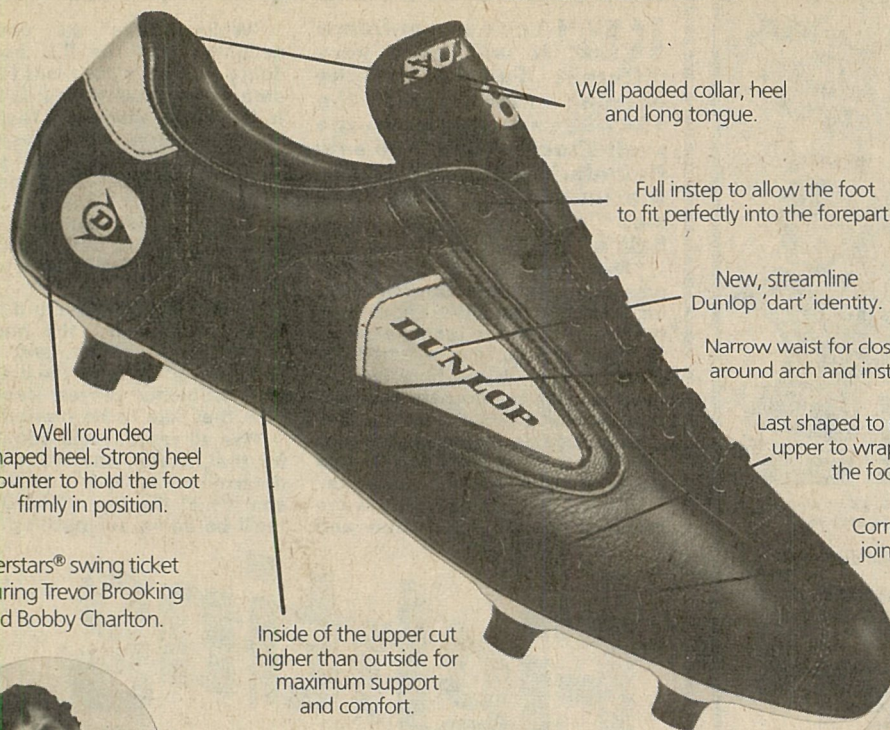
His goal in Seville on Albion's pre-season tour indicates a John Wark-like capacity for scoring goals from midfield, a talent Atkinson worked on before he left to take charge at Manchester United.

He scored just four League goals last season, and one goal in the League Cup, and if there is a side of his game he wishes to improve upon this season it is in breaching the tight First Division defences which Albion are sure to face.

Bryan Robson's constant transfer demands are obviously a source of worry to Ronnie Allen. But he knows that as long as he has Remi Moses in his midfield, Albion will never be short of aggression.

And with England's Under 21 side due to take on Norway next Tuesday, the young internationals will be looking for him to guarantee qualification for the UEFA U-21 Championship Finals.

Nothing appears to be beyond the shy, quietly spoken and likeable Remi Moses. But then with a name like that he has much to live up to.



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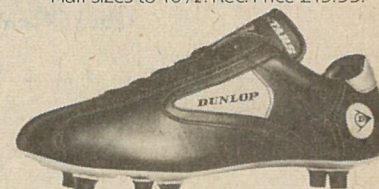
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KEVIN Lock is confident that it will be a very different Fulham in the opening months of the 1981-82 season from the shell-shocked band we saw floundering dangerously in the lower reaches of Division Three during the first half of last term.

"This time we know exactly what to expect right from the kick-off," said Kevin. "We know how the majority of the teams we'll be facing are going to play, and more important, we know how we will have to play to compete successfully against them."

"The key is going to be our willingness, first and foremost, to battle and compete in every game. It's no good us believing we're better than the opposition and

"While we're all obviously delighted that the R.L. boys are doing so well, all the lads here are determined that they don't want to live in the shadow of them for a second season. No disrespect to those blokes, of course. It's just a question of our own personal pride."

"We're all 100 per cent behind Malcolm, and his determination to put this club firmly back on the soccer map."

"With his own playing days still fresh in his mind, the boss still thinks like a player, and consequently understands the pressures and problems players face, and how they like to be treated."

"We all respect and admire him for that, that's why we're just as determined as he is that this season it's at the top of the Division we'll be doing our battling."

Fighting Fulham

expecting them to give us the opportunity to prove it. Because they won't!

"We need to assert ourselves first. Stamp our authority firmly on the game, THEN we can go on to play the kind of football we know we're capable of."

"Last season, it was a culmination of several things which resulted in our poor start," emphasised Lock.

"The players finally came to terms with the situation and started to turn the corner when Malcolm Macdonald was appointed manager last November."

"Malcolm is a very positive sort of person, always bubbling over with good ideas," said Lock.

'Survival'

"But when he first arrived, he made it clear that the number one aim *had* to be survival. We had to stop the rot, then consolidate our position."

"When that was achieved, we used what was left of the season to take stock of the Division, and to educate ourselves on just what we'd need to do this term, in order to be in contention for one of those promotion places."

"Now with the slate wiped clean, and a whole new season ahead of us, we're all champing at the bit, I can assure you."

"Fulham are first and foremost a football club. But the success last season of the newly formed Rugby League side at Craven Cottage meant that not only were they attracting more publicity than their soccer-playing counterparts, they were attracting bigger crowds, too. A point Kevin insists wasn't lost on him, or his teammates."



It wasn't Ray Clemence's day on his Spurs debut. First he dropped a cross for Peter Withe to score (left) and then he claims he was fouled by David Geddis when Withe netted again (right).



WITHE AND FALCO STRIKE IT RICH

Aston Villa's experienced striker Peter Withe and Tottenham's "rookie" centre-forward Mark Falco stole the show with two goals apiece in the drawn Charity Shield game at Wembley. Falco was still at school when Withe launched his career.



Mark Falco, standing in for the injured Garth Crooks, certainly made a good impression with two superbly struck shots to give Spurs at least six months possession of the Charity Shield.

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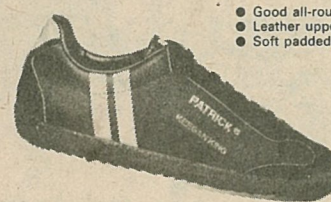
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NO player in the Football League looked forward to the opening salvos of the 1981/82 campaign more eagerly than Ipswich Town's England international, Kevin Beattie, whose unenviable injury record during the past four years has tested to the full the courage and character that have been saluted so often by the Portman Road fans.

Last season, in the F.A. Cup Semi-Final defeat by Manchester City at Villa Park, the injury hoodoo that has scarred so much of Kevin's career struck yet again.

"What got me down most was the fact that I could never really be sure that I was going to have a lengthy run in the first team. I'd be out through injury, come back for a few games, then my knee would play up again and I'd be on the sidelines once more."

Until the serious knee trouble that has bitten so deeply into his career since 1977, Beattie's colossal strength, exuberance, and superb defensive qualities looked as if they were to be a source of inspiration to England teams for a long time to come.

Even though the operation scars on his knee remind him that the nine England caps he won

BROKEN ARM GOOD FOR BEATTIE

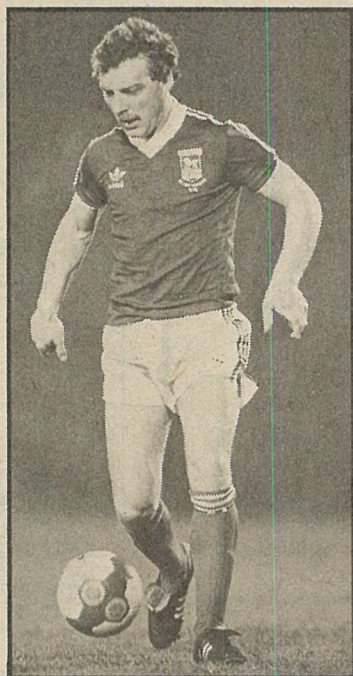
On that occasion, it was a broken arm that prematurely dropped the curtain on another season of frustration and anxiety for the powerful central defender.

Beattie's long, melancholy trail of adversity began in the 1977/78 season with a nagging injury to his right knee that severely restricted his Ipswich appearances, although he did play a major part in the Suffolk club's F.A. Cup Final victory over Arsenal.

During the following summer, Kevin underwent surgery for cartilage trouble, the first of four operations that, over the next three years, were to remove him from the international spotlight and put his future as a player at risk.

"It wasn't difficult during those miserable years to take a pessimistic view of what the medical verdict on my knee might be," recalls the Ipswich power-house.

"I lived with the possibility that the specialist's opinion could put me out of the game for good.



A blessing in disguise for Kevin Beattie? The broken arm suffered during last season's F.A. Cup Semi-Final defeat by Manchester City has given his recurring knee problems time to recover properly.

between 1975 and 1978 could have been considerably more, Kevin reveals an infectious optimism when he looks ahead to the forthcoming season.

"The arm injury I got in the Semi-Final against Manchester City could turn out to be the best thing that's happened to me for a long time. It's given my knee plenty of time to mend, and the rest has done it a world of good. In previous seasons I've always been worried and edgy about making a quick recovery and getting back to the side.

"This time it's been different. I've taken it easy — a bit of light jogging and some gentle exercise. Now, the knee feels great."

The plaster cast encasing his arm was removed a week or two before the Ipswich players

reported for pre-season training, and although the fracture has knit together, Beattie still had to have a protective shield for the injury.

"The specialist had a lightweight plastic guard made for me," continues Beattie, "so that I could take part in the pre-season training."

"Now, I'm hoping that my injury problems are a thing of the past. I reckon I'm due a run of good luck for a change."

'Tremendous'

"There is so much talent in the squad that competition for places is going to be tremendous, but I'm hoping to play a part in what I feel is going to be an even more successful season for us."

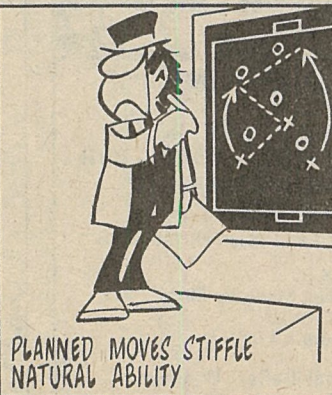
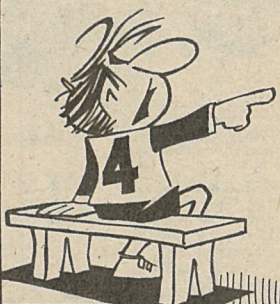
There is another target set squarely in the sights of the burly 27-year-old Ipswich star — a recall to the full England squad.

"Just being part of the England set-up was something special. I want to enjoy all of it again."

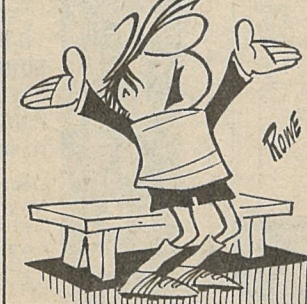


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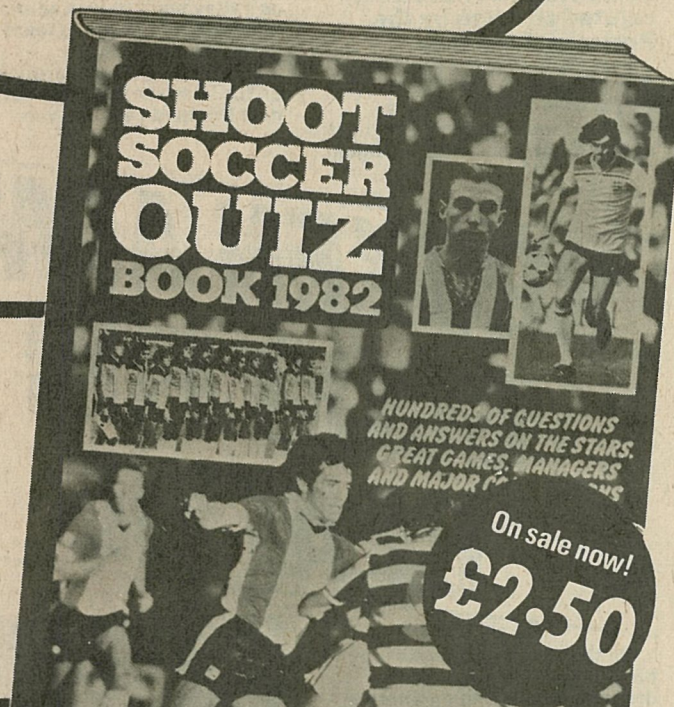
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SOCCER DIARY

1981-1982

SEPTEMBER

Sat 5 F.A. Cup — Preliminary Round
 Tues 8 Norway v England, Under-21 (Friendly)
 Wed 9 Norway v England (World Cup)
 Scotland v Sweden (World Cup)
 Czechoslovakia v Wales (World Cup)
 Holland v Republic of Ireland (World Cup)
 Wed 16 European Cup, Cup-Winners' Cup, UEFA Cup — 1st Round, 1st Leg
 League Cup — 1st Round, 2nd Leg
 Sat 19 F.A. Cup — 1st Qualifying Round
 Wed 30 European Cup, Cup-Winners' Cup, UEFA Cup — 1st Round, 2nd Leg

OCTOBER

Sat 3 F.A. Cup — 2nd Qualifying Round
 Sat 3 -Sun 18th World Youth Cup in Australia
 Wed 7 League Cup — 2nd Round, 1st Leg
 Wed 14 Northern Ireland v Scotland (World Cup)
 Wales v Iceland (World Cup)
 Republic of Ireland v France (World Cup)
 Sat 17 F.A. Cup — 3rd Qualifying Round
 Wed 21 European Cup, Cup-Winners' Cup, UEFA Cup — 2nd Round, 1st Leg
 Wed 28 League Cup — 2nd Round, 2nd Leg
 Sat 31 F.A. Cup — 4th Qualifying Round

NOVEMBER

Wed 4 European Cup, Cup-Winners' Cup, UEFA Cup — 2nd Round, 2nd Leg
 Wed 11 League Cup — 3rd Round
 Tues 17 England v Hungary (UEFA Under-21)
 Wed 18 England v Hungary (World Cup)
 Northern Ireland v Israel (World Cup)
 Portugal v Scotland (World Cup)
 USSR v Wales (World Cup)
 Sat 21 F.A. Cup — 1st Round
 Wed 25 UEFA Cup — 3rd Round, 1st Leg

DECEMBER

Wed 2 League Cup — 4th Round
 Wed 9 UEFA Cup — 3rd Round, 2nd Leg
 Sat 12 F.A. Cup — 2nd Round
 Scottish F.A. Cup — 1st Round

JANUARY

Sat 2 F.A. Cup — 3rd Round
 Sat 9 Scottish F.A. Cup — 2nd Round
 Wed 13 League Cup — 5th Round
 Sat 23 F.A. Cup — 4th Round
 Scottish F.A. Cup — 3rd Round

FEBRUARY

Wed 3 League Cup — Semi-Final, 1st Leg
 Wed 10 League Cup — Semi-Final, 2nd Leg
 Sat 13 F.A. Cup — 5th Round
 Scottish F.A. Cup — 4th Round
 Tues 23 England v Northern Ireland (British Championship)
 Wed 24 Spain v Scotland (Friendly)

MARCH

Wed 3 European Cup, Cup-Winners' Cup — 3rd Round, 1st Leg
 UEFA Cup — 4th Round, 1st Leg
 Sat 6 F.A. Cup — 6th Round
 Scottish F.A. Cup — 5th Round
 Sat 13 League Cup Final — Wembley
 Wed 17 European Cup, Cup-Winners' Cup — 3rd Round, 2nd Leg
 UEFA Cup — 4th Round, 2nd Leg
 Tues 23 France v England Under-21 (Friendly)
 Wed 24 France v England (Friendly)
 Scotland v Holland (Friendly)

APRIL

Sat 3 F.A. Cup — Semi-Finals
 Scottish F.A. Cup — Semi-Finals
 Wed 7 European Cup, Cup-Winners' Cup, UEFA Cup — Semi-Finals, 1st Leg
 Wed 21 European Cup, Cup-Winners' Cup, UEFA Cup — Semi-Finals, 2nd Leg
 Tues 27 Wales v England (British Championship)
 Wed 28 Northern Ireland v Scotland (British Championship)

MAY

Wed 5 UEFA Cup Final — 1st Leg
 Wed 12 European Cup-Winners' Cup Final
 Wed 19 UEFA Cup Final — 2nd Leg
 Sat 22 F.A. Cup Final — Wembley
 Scottish F.A. Cup Final — Hampden Park
 Mon 24 Scotland v Wales (British Championship)
 Wed 26 European Cup Final
 Thurs 27 Wales v Northern Ireland (British Championship)
 Scotland v England (British Championship)
 Sat 29

JUNE

Thurs 3 Finland v England (Friendly)
 Sun 13 -Sun July 11:
 WORLD CUP FINALS IN SPAIN

FOOTBALL LEAGUE CUP DATES AT A GLANCE

Wed Sept 2 — 1st Round, 1st Leg
 Wed Sept 16 — 1st Round, 2nd Leg
 Wed Oct 7 — 2nd Round, 1st Leg
 Wed Oct 28 — 2nd Round, 2nd Leg
 Wed Nov 11 — 3rd Round
 Wed Dec 2 — 4th Round
 Wed Jan 13 — 5th Round
 Wed Feb 3 — Semi-Finals, 1st Leg
 Wed Feb 10 — Semi-Finals, 2nd Leg
 Sat Mar 13 — Final (Wembley)

NOTE From 1st to 5th Rounds inclusive, matches may be re-arranged to take place earlier in the week specified.

F.A. CUP DATES ROUND BY ROUND

Sat Sept 5 — Preliminary Round
 Sat Sept 19 — 1st Qualifying Round
 Sat Oct 3 — 2nd Qualifying Round
 Sat Oct 17 — 3rd Qualifying Round
 Sat Oct 31 — 4th Qualifying Round
 Sat Nov 21 — 1st Round Proper
 Sat Dec 12 — 2nd Round
 Sat Jan 2 — 3rd Round
 Sat Jan 23 — 4th Round
 Sat Feb 13 — 5th Round
 Sat Mar 6 — 6th Round
 Sat Apr 3 — Semi-Finals
 Sat May 22 — Final (Wembley)

SCOTTISH LEAGUE CUP DATES

Sat Aug 15-Wed Aug 26 — Qualifying Group Matches
 (Subsequent stages of competition — dates undecided at time of going to press)

SCOTTISH F.A. CUP DATES

Sat Dec 12 — 1st Round
 Sat Jan 9 — 2nd Round
 Sat Jan 23 — 3rd Round
 Sat Feb 13 — 4th Round
 Sat Mar 6 — 5th Round
 Sat Apr 3 — Semi-Finals
 Sat May 22 — Final (Hampden Park)

BIG DERBY DATES IN DIV. I

Sat Sept 26 — Aston Villa v Birmingham City
 Sat Feb 20 — Birmingham City v Aston Villa
 Sat Oct 10 — Man City v Man United
 Sat Feb 27 — Man United v Man City
 Sat Nov 7 — Liverpool v Everton
 Sat Mar 27 — Everton v Liverpool
 Sat Nov 14 — Middlesbrough v Sunderland
 Sat Apr 3 — Sunderland v Middlesbrough
 Mon Dec 28 — Tottenham v Arsenal
 Mon Apr 12 — Arsenal v Tottenham
 Mon Dec 28 — Nottm Forest v Notts County
 Mon Apr 12 — Notts County v Nottm Forest



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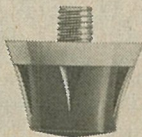
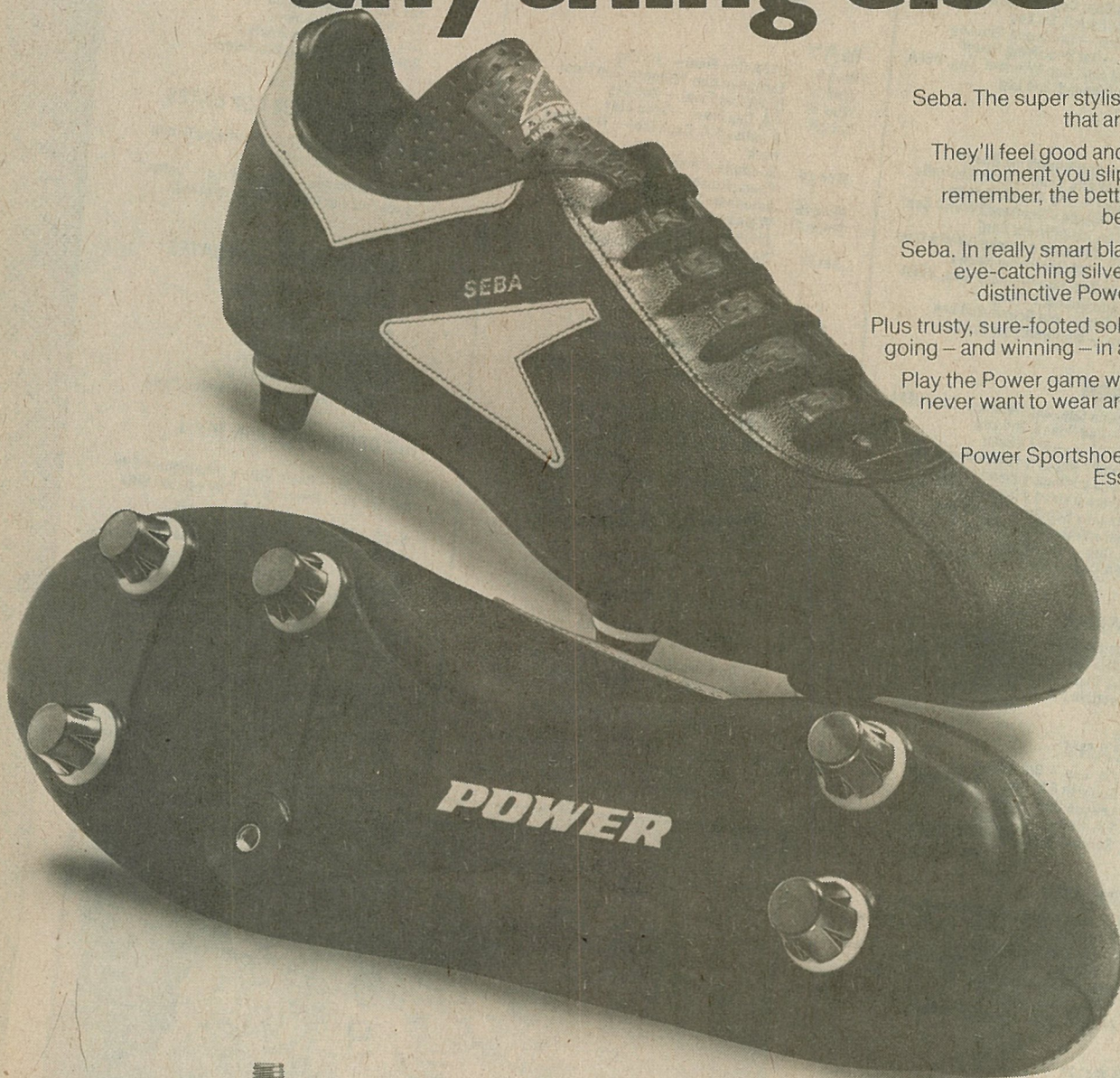
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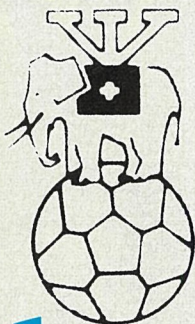
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POWER

CLUB SPOTLIGHT

COVENTRY'S First Division rivals this season could suffer the backlash of Dave Sexton's sacking by Manchester United.

The former Old Trafford boss, wounded deeply by the United board's decision after leading them to eighth place in the table last season, has pledged himself to prove his critics wrong.



Sexton medicine

to cure

And that could mean a dashing and determined Coventry chasing glory in the Cups if not challenging heavily for the First Division Championship.

Sexton, the son of a Champion boxer, has lifted himself off the floor after being shown the door at United and grasped the lifeline thrown him by Jimmy Hill and the Coventry board.

Sexton has worked long hours since his arrival at Highfield Road to drive a shot of professionalism into the club. Last season they had the flair, a spirit hitherto missing from their teamwork, and a rugged will to win.

But when the chips were down after their astonishing eclipse in the Semi-Finals of the League Cup against West Ham, the club went to pieces. They managed to salvage some pride by beating Middlesbrough and Southampton and drawing with Stoke and Nottingham Forest in their last four League matches, but the Highfield Road fans were bitterly disappointed after such a bright start to the season.

Determination

This time the Sexton-inspired Coventry will possess an even greater determination and more character if matches are going against them. They have suffered from inexperience in the past and no amount of youthful running can compensate for a shortage of know-how at crucial stages of matches.

Sexton joins Coventry with a determination to steer the club to the first trophy in its history. The sad fact of life at Highfield Road is that the team's performances have not matched the frontier-smashing activities of Jimmy Hill-inspired commercial wizards behind the scenes.

Coventry's attacking formation could raise a few eyebrows this season as they thrust not two, but

three, strikers into the fray.

Mark Hateley, Tom English, and Garry Thompson, one of the most improved centre-forwards in the country, have developed a potentially lethal and telepathic understanding in several seasons together at youth, reserve and First Division level.

They are likely to form the sharp end of Coventry's attack for much of the season now that 26-year-old Mike Ferguson, goalscoring hero a few seasons back in harness with Ian Wallace, has been sold to Everton.

The choice of Coventry's three sharpshooters stands or falls on Sexton's ability to find width for the attack. A dull 0-0 draw against Cardiff City in the close season revealed that the cutting edge of



Hateley, English and Thompson will not work unless they receive the service they demand.

Some of their problems could be eradicated now they have signed Dutch Under-21 international Rudi Kaiser. Coventry's Belgian

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Second Division Champions: 1967.
Third Division Champions: 1964.
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international Roger Van Gool was used in part-exchange with Antwerp.

The 21-year-old Antwerp left-winger, who began his career with Ajax, has been on trial at Coventry. His thrust down the flanks will be invaluable.

Coventry's reluctance to shop for new players suggests that Sexton is happy with the squad he has inherited from Gordon Milne, now operating as general manager.

He has approached Manchester United for Kevin Moran, the "Red Devils" powerful Dublin-born defender, but the on-off transfer negotiations for Frank Stapleton between Arsenal and United

delayed a possible change of clubs for Moran.

It has long been felt that Coventry have the right players, but need time for their young players to gain experience.

Sexton's formation for the pre-season friendly at Ninian Park serves as a taster of his likely formation this winter: Sealey; Thomas, Roberts, Jones, Dyson, Gillespie, England, Daly, Thompson, Hateley, Hunt.

The introduction of two signings allied to Sexton's brilliance as a coach and pledge to prove his critics misguided could be just the medicine Coventry need to do justice to the unveiling of their all-seater stadium.



Graham Roberts, Paul Dyson and Gary Gillespie blot out former Coventry star Ian Wallace.

COVENT



RY CITY

BACK ROW (left to right): Garry Thompson, Mark Hateley, Gary Gillespie, Paul Dyson, Steve Whitton, Mick Ferguson (now Everton).
MIDDLE ROW: Colin Dobson (reserve coach), Jim Hagan, David Jones, Les Sealey, Jim Blyth, Steve Jacobs, Gerry Daly, John Sillett (youth coach), George Dalton (physio).
FRONT ROW: Steve Hunt, Tom English, Danny Thomas, Dave Sexton (manager), Ray Gooding, Brian Roberts, Peter Bodak.



SHOOT!

ARSENAL MUST WIN THE TITLE FOR O'LEARY



A HUGE sigh of relief swept through North London when it was announced that David O'Leary had agreed to stay with Arsenal.

But while the Highbury fans were understandably delighted, at the same time they were left asking how their club could satisfy O'Leary's demands yet could not resist Manchester United's overtures for Frank Stapleton.

Both men could undoubtedly have earned a fortune by following their former Republic of Ireland team-mate Liam Brady to the Continent.

Neither has done that, but if we are to believe all that we read, Stapleton will be earning something in the region of £2,000 a week at United.

But at the same time, Arsenal must have at least the same financial resources as United, and it is pretty obvious that O'Leary won't be short of a bob or two, either.

Both players insist that money wasn't their prime consideration, and their decisions to stay in Britain and face the tax man seem to bear those claims out.

Clearly then, O'Leary and Stapleton are motivated by different incentives.



Frank Stapleton's goalscoring ability will be missed at Arsenal.

The challenge of a new club, new surroundings and new team-mates appeals to Stapleton.

But after a lot of deliberation, O'Leary has agreed to stay at Highbury until his 27th birthday, in May, 1985.

Then he is almost certain to move on, but before that time arrives Europe's most highly-rated central defender has a lot of ambitions to fulfil with the club he has always loved.

Six years of regular first team football have so far produced only one winners' medal — a souvenir of the 1979 F.A. Cup Final defeat of Manchester United.

He also has runners-up medals for the F.A. Cup and Cup-Winners' Cup, but that is precious little to show for the hundreds of polished performances which O'Leary has

turned in since making his debut as a raw 17-year-old under former manager Bertie Mee.

O'Leary would love to be a Champion Gunner before his new contract expires, because although Arsenal have always been there or thereabouts, they have never seriously challenged for the title since 1971.

It is clear that his feelings for Arsenal go much deeper than the normal player-club relationship.

Although very much a Dubliner, O'Leary was in fact born in North London. When his parents returned to their native Eire shortly before David's first birthday, they took with them an affiliation for Arsenal which was to be inherited by their son.

Since coming back to the area as an Arsenal player in 1974, he has virtually been adopted by the club.

They have looked after him well and even the notoriously fickle Arsenal fans have been unanimous in their praise for the big stopper.

Perhaps, then, it was partly out of gratitude that O'Leary put pen to paper.

The fact that he plans to marry soon also may have swayed the decision in Arsenal's favour.

In fact, what appeared to be the biggest stumbling block to O'Leary accepting Arsenal's offer was that he was annoyed how everybody had automatically assumed he would re-sign.

Guilty

In attempting to persuade Stapleton to stay put, the Arsenal management team seem to have been guilty of neglecting the problems of their star centre-half.

Yet as soon as he started to make the unhappy noises people never expected to hear from the quiet, unassuming O'Leary, Arsenal moved quickly and successfully to satisfy the one man they could not afford to lose.

Resigned to losing Stapleton, manager Terry Neill turned his immediate priority to keeping O'Leary.

At the time, both John Devine and Willie Young were also seeking a move and for a while at least, Arsenal were in grave danger of losing three quarters of their defence less than a month before the new season kicked-off.

O'Leary has been as disappointed as anyone at Highbury over first Brady's and then Stapleton's decision to move on.

He knows that an immediate replacement must be found for the flagging Arsenal attack, and is disappointed that Brady has never been adequately replaced.

Arsenal owe it to David O'Leary to go out now and bring the players to Highbury who can match their captain's burning ambitions:

His loyalty to the club may not be so strong if they don't...

THE richest seam of football talent in Britain? Surely the Swansea school-boys organisation outstrips even the North-East of England for its production belt of internationals stars — and now Swansea City bring the latest product into the First Division: 18-year-old Dudley Lewis.

Swans manager John Toshack says: 'I've no fears about the lad at all. Although he played only the last dozen games as we won promotion, he learnt more in those weeks than many players learn in years.'

The rise of Lewis was one of football's fairy stories last season — and it ended with one of the most vivid incidents of the campaign. As The Swans clinched promotion at Preston in their final match, manager Toshack sprinted across the pitch to embrace Lewis.

The television cameras picked him out racing past all his galaxy of Welsh, Scottish and Yugoslav internationals to throw his arms around the youngest and newest player. It was a recognition from one of the best known men in football that Lewis had won his spurs.

"To be honest, I was caught by surprise when the manager did that," says Lewis. "I'm not quite sure why he picked me out in that moment of all moments . . . but I'm not complaining."

Nor is Toshack, who is convinced that the teenager can handle a task in the First Division normally reserved for players of



KID LEWIS HAS WON HIS SPURS

ten years experience and a proven track record of big match triumphs.

At 18, in fact, Lewis will probably be one of the youngest sweepers ever to play regular First Division football. It is a prospect which does not trouble him in the slightest.

"I don't worry myself with names or reputations; I don't get excited or nervous. Even when I made my debut at Notts County last February or waiting in the dressing room for that decisive showdown against Preston, I was perfectly relaxed," he says.

"Temperament is important, especially when I'm playing sweeper, which is my favourite defensive position."

Lewis is equally positive about his future. "I had convinced myself that I would make The Swans first team. What really came as a bonus was to win my place at just that moment with promotion 'on'. To come into a good side playing well is the ideal start."

The post-War years of Welsh football have been thick with the discoveries of Swansea Schools football. John and Mel Charles, Ivor and Len Allchurch, Terry Medwin, Trevor Ford, Ray Daniel, Cliff Jones, Barrie Jones, Barry Hole, Mel Nurse and many more.

History

The side which Swansea City bring to the First Division for the first time in their history includes three more who are already full internationals: Jeremy Charles, Robbie James and Leighton James. No one has any doubts that Lewis will succeed.

"Undoubtedly one of the finest prospects I've ever seen," says Wales manager Mike England — who, as one of the great centre-halves of post-War football, knows a defender when he sees one. He did not have the slightest hesitation last season in naming him as Wales Youth skipper.

It is only a question of time

before Dudley Lewis advances into the full Wales side . . . and time is something he is not allowing himself. "I believe that Wales will reach the World Cup Finals. By that time, I want to be in the national squad," he rules.

"My ambition is to be in Spain next summer — and that is a prospect which does excite me."

The ironic twist in the rocketing career of Lewis is that the player he has to attack for that Wales spot is Leighton Phillips. Despite his brilliance for Wales, it was Phillips who lost his Swansea place to the inexperienced Lewis during the promotion 'run in'. Now Lewis has the advantage of First Division football while Phillips must show his skills remain intact at Charlton, just promoted back to the Second.

The recent signing of £300,000 Colin Irwin from Liverpool has not deterred young Dudley. The arrival of the new Swansea skipper has only made the teenage defender even more determined to succeed at the Vetch Field this season.

BIG MATCHES OF THE DAY

Saturday, September 5th

Liverpool v Arsenal

ARSENAL are making their 58th League visit to Anfield, where they have done better than most clubs in recent years, losing only three times in their last nine games. Last season a late equaliser by Alan Sunderland saved them a point in a 1-1 draw.

In view of Liverpool's record over the last few years, it is surprising that they have only won six of their last 15 home First Division games against Arsenal.

But it is only fair to mention that Liverpool clinched their 1963-64 League Championship win with a 5-0 thrashing of Arsenal at Anfield.

Spurs v Aston Villa

VILLA have seldom found White Hart Lane to be a happy hunting ground, although they have done better there recently, and two wins in their three visits since returning to the First Division is twice as many victories as they achieved in their previous 20 visits. Indeed, in view of their success last season, it was perhaps a little surprising that they failed to make it a hat-trick of wins at White Hart Lane and were beaten 2-0.

Spurs fans happily recall their double-winning campaign of 1960-61 when they hammered Villa 6-2. Their most recent meeting, of course, was the 2-2 Charity Shield draw at Wembley last month.

S'ton v Everton

THIS will only be Everton's 15th League game at Southampton and they will be looking for an improvement on previous form there. Everton have not scored in their last five League games at The Dell. To be precise, it is 8 hours 1 minute of football without an Everton goal, because the last one was a header by Mike Buckley in the 29th minute of their 1-0 win in April, 1972.

Man. Utd v Ipswich

IPSWICH are another First Division club playing away from home on Saturday who will be looking to get more goals than usual at their particular venue. The East Anglian club have only twice scored as many as two goals in a League game at Old Trafford and have failed to score in nine of their 15 visits.

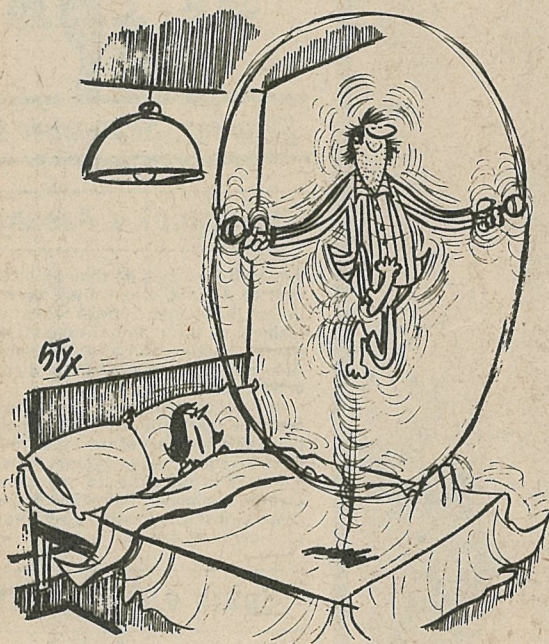
The last time Ipswich collected a point at Old Trafford was four years ago in a goalless draw.

Sunderland v West Ham

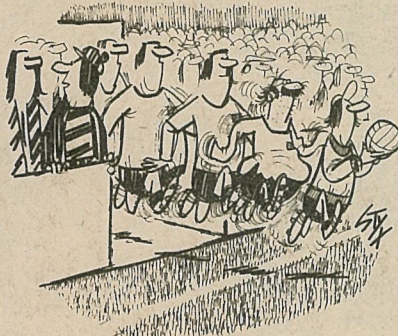
WEST HAM have lost their last three League games at Roker Park and still have nightmares about that 6-0 hammering on this ground in March, 1977 when Mel Holden two, Gary Rowell two, Bobby Kerr and Bob Lee got the goals.

The Hammers' last win at Sunderland was in the Roker Park club's relegation season of 1969-70 when Geoff Hurst earned West Ham both points with the only goal of the game.

FOOTBALL FUNNIES



"I know you've got to be fit for Saturday's big game . . . but this is getting ridiculous."



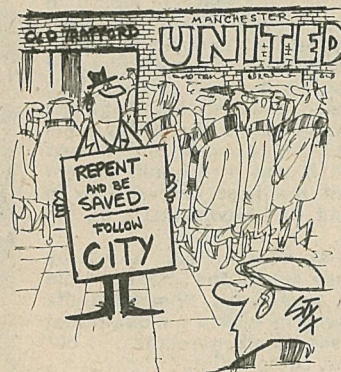
"They arrived one man short so they've had to call up the coach driver."



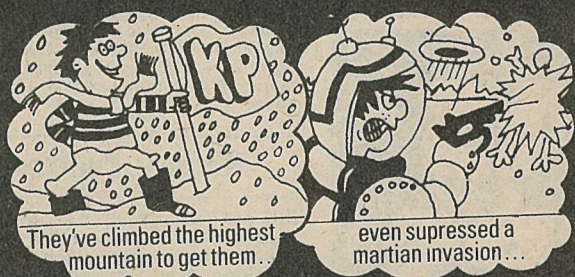
"And to my dear wife — who absolutely hates football — I leave my rattle and scarf."



This week defender Mick Baxter, Middlesbrough's recent big-money buy from Preston, selects the jokes specially drawn by our cartoonist Styx.



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They've climbed the highest mountain to get them...

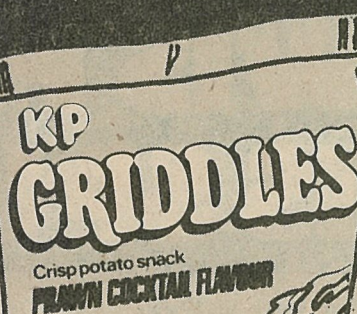
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to SHOOT!

This week's Star Letter comes from Matthew Codd of Norwich, who wins our Star Prize of £10. He writes:

STOP THIS WELSH FARCE!

NOW that Swansea City are a First Division club, isn't it about time something is done about the anachronism of the Welsh Cup?

Here we have a small and exclusive clique of mostly second-rate League clubs taking part in their own cosy little Cup competition against such other teams as Connah's Quay Nomads, Pont Hanffraith, and Brymbo Steelworks, and the winners are usually given entry to the European Cup-Winners' Cup.

I say "usually" because Welsh clubs taking part don't even have to win the trophy to get their ticket to Europe.

If they are lucky enough to find themselves playing an English club in the Final, they know that they can lose by a hatful of goals and still sail serenely into a glamorous and often lucrative Cup-Winners' Cup-tie.

This was illustrated in 1979 when Shrewsbury beat Wrexham in the Final. It was the Racecourse Ground club which 'qualified' for Europe while Shrewsbury had to stay in England and dream of what might have been.

It seems unfair to all other League clubs that Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham should have this yearly opportunity to slip into Europe through the back door.

Since this loophole exists and seems unlikely to be closed, shouldn't this 'gang of four' at least be excluded from the F.A. Cup to compensate?

This absurd state of affairs is now highlighted by the fact that this season Swansea City will have four routes into Europe open to them: the League, F.A. Cup, League Cup and Welsh Cup. I can't think of any other club in Europe which is in such a position of privilege.

● Wales are a member of UEFA and as such the winners of their national Cup are entitled to go into the Cup-Winners' Cup ... if they're Welsh. It should be pointed out that however privileged the Welsh clubs may be, they've done well in Europe. Who will forget Newport's heroics last season?

Newport's Tommy Tynan takes on Carl Zeiss Jena during last season's Cup-Winners' Cup Quarter-Finals.



'Fantastic' Frank

FRANK WORTHINGTON says as long as there is any chance of him playing for England he will continue to play in England. What a fantastic attitude to take!

If only a few more players thought like that we could have already have booked the tickets for Spain.

His chances of playing for England again are remote to say the least, but it must be refreshing for Ron Greenwood to know that Frank will always be there should he ever need a goalscorer, if Keegan, Francis, Mariner and Co. ever fail to produce the goods, which is more than can be said of some.

GRANT TOOKEY, NAILSEA.

● Frank may be a bit of a playboy ... occasionally controversial ... but no one can deny his skill or that he has the right attitude towards the game.

England privileged

THE new president of the Football League, Jack Dunnett, states he will do all he can to enable Ron Greenwood to

get players released for international matches.

Can we assume that the managers of Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire will have the same privilege, or is this a new way of giving England the unfair advantage they so obviously need?

NIGEL STAPLEY, WREXHAM.

● Be grateful Welsh players play in the English League. It makes them better players for Wales.

End of an era

AUGUST 15th, 1981 ... the end of an era. Ray Clemence left Liverpool for Spurs — they say a good 'keeper is worth ten points a season. Ray must have been worth 15 to The Reds.

Two seasons ago he conceded just 16 League goals. Spurs' fans can look forward to more success now: the combination of Ardiles, Archibald and Clemence is a winner!

PETER JAUNUSCH, WINDSOR.

● I wouldn't bet against Ray winning a Cup-Winners' Cup medal to complete his set.



No second Best

NO doubt Manchester United fans are thrilled by the news that they have a lad on their books who, according to scout Bob Bishop, is better than George Best was at his age.

I would advise all those excited Man. Utd fans not to expect too much from the lad, in fact, not expect him to be a world beater.

The reason for my scepticism is that in SHOOT dated 11th April, 1970, on page three you wrote of United's 15-year-old superstar.

A boy who was supposed to be a "demon of the lightning bodyswerve and quick dribble", who was also "devastating in midfield."

United's Irish-based scout Bob Bishop also said that this lad was better than George Best was at the same age.

The wonder-boy's name? None other than Sammy Mellroy, who has not come within a million miles of Best's talent.

ERROL LAWRENCE, GREENWICH.

● It's easy to be wise after the event, but no one should ever be compared with George Best. He was an original and I think the mould's been thrown away.

Germans so professional

THE West Germans are so professional, disciplined and organised — no wonder they are such a power in international football as well as their clubs competing in Europe.

When Helmut Schoen was in charge of the national side, learning the job was the number two, Jupp Derwall.

When Derwall took over the West Germans won the European Championship. How's that for continuation — and thorough professionalism?

I make the West Germans favourites for Spain 1982, with Brazil runners up. I reckon Brazil may have hit their peak too soon.

J. FORSTER, DENTON BURN.

● The German domestic system makes it easier for the national team ... yet overall, English clubs come out on top against Bundesliga opposition.

Leave bosses alone

ONE important reason why Bob Paisley, John Lyall and Bobby Robson have kept their jobs and achieved success with their respective clubs is that they have been left to manage and have not been the target of rebellious and interfering directors.

Other clubs please note.

C. FRANCIS, STOWMARKET.

● Too many clubs panic after an indifferent season. And too many chairmen fancy themselves as managers.

Ask THE Expert

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No Steel

Did the great Scottish international inside forward Billy Steel play for Liverpool in the late 1940's?

ROLAND HILL, BERMUDA

● No, Roland — he didn't!

Steel had only three League clubs. He kicked-off his peacetime professional career with Morton in 1946-47 — he was sensationally picked for his first cap against England before the season was out.

A few weeks later, he was transferred to Derby for a then new British record fee of £15,500.

In 1950 Steel moved on to Dundee, and played out his last four League seasons for them.

All told, in a career which started late due to the War, he was capped 30 times, scoring 12 goals. He also played, and scored, for the Great Britain XI, which routed the Rest of Europe XI 6-1 at Hampden Park in May, 1947.

Quickest threesome

What is the quickest hat-trick ever scored in a major League game?

G. FULCHER, OLDHAM

● As far as the Football League and Scottish League are concerned, at least half a dozen or so players have hit one in three minutes.

But the prize there seems to go to Jimmy Scarth — for Gillingham v. Orient, in Division Three (South), on 1st November, 1952 — just inside two and a half minutes.

And, more recently, Ian Scanlon wasn't far behind with a hat-trick in two and three-quarter minutes — for Notts County v. Sheffield Wednesday, in Division Two, on 16th November, 1974.

SHORT PASSES

● British clubs have won the European Champions Cup seven times — through Celtic (1967); Manchester United (1968); Liverpool (1977, 1978, and 1981); and Nottm. Forest (1979 and 1980).

(ANTHONY WOODFORD, Norfolk)

● Bill Shankly took over from Phil Taylor as Liverpool's manager on 1st December, 1959; he retired from the post on 12th July, 1974.

(J. MACPHEE, Renfrewshire)

● Newcastle have won the F.A. Cup six times (1910, 1924, 1932, 1951, 1952, and 1955) to Manchester United's four (1909, 1948, 1963, and 1977).

(GRAEME BUCHAN, Huddersfield)

Short Passes are replies to readers' letters.

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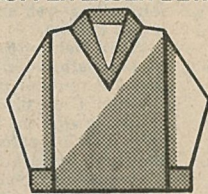
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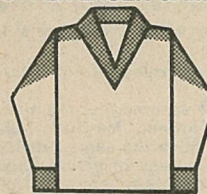
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40", 42".
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THE wedding of the year may well be over, but Luton Town manager David Pleat is busy laying plans for a 'bridal' celebration of his own, sometime around next May.

That's when he hopes to scotch once and for all the suggestions that Luton are only ever destined to be the bridesmaid, never the blushing bride.

Having looked, and performed, like strong contenders for promotion from Division Two several

'JINX ON US? RUBBISH!'

times in recent years, The Hatters seem to have made a habit of slipping up on the home straight, and finding themselves left on the shelf once again.

"Last season we did tremendously well to even get ourselves in contention for one of those top three places," says Pleat.

"After beating West Ham at Upton Park on the opening day of the League programme, we then lost six of our next ten games. And that was relegation, not promotion form.

"That's all history now though," he insists. "I've told the players to forget it. It's dead and buried. What matters now isn't what happened last season, but what's going to happen this time.

"People talk about there being a jinx on us. That's rubbish. If we'd have been good enough, we'd have gone up on merit. But when it came to the crunch, we weren't. That's why I've been involved in some close season buying and selling. Hopefully, to make sure that this time there's no mistake."

Pleat said he was particularly happy to secure the services of Brian Horton from Brighton.

"Brian's a skipper in every sense of the word," enthused Pleat.

declares
Luton manager
David Pleat



Pleat wants to see Mal Donaghy (left) featured in our Focus On regularly as a Most Difficult Opponent.

"Having led Brighton to promotion twice, first from Division Three, then into Division One, he knows exactly what's required.

"Not only is he a fine player himself, he's a tremendous inspiration to others. And I'm looking to him to provide the fighting qualities we may have lacked previously.

"Brian has earned the respect of his fellow professionals in every Division he's played. That's what I keep telling the rest of the side they have to do.

"When I pick up a copy of SHOOT!, and look at the Focus page, I want to see players naming their 'most difficult opponent' as Mal Donaghy, or Kirk Stevens, Ricky Hill or Brian Stein."

Pleat knows the nine months ahead are going to be far from easy. And he predicts that next season the Second Division is going to be possibly the most entertaining of the four.

'Quick Return'

"The big-city clubs such as Chelsea, Queens Park Rangers, Sheffield Wednesday, Newcastle and Derby can't afford to spend another season in the Second. While the likes of Norwich, Leicester and Crystal Palace will obviously be seeking a quick return to Division One.

"You'll notice that all those clubs I've mentioned have the reputation of preferring to play good football, rather than to try and hustle and bustle their way through games.

"That sort of approach will suit us down to the ground," insists Pleat. "People have often gone out of their way to praise the way we've played in recent seasons. Had we made it to the First Division, I'm sure we'd have given a good account of ourselves.

"But it's no good thinking we're too good for the Second Division, yet still having to play in it.

"With so many clubs looking for success, I don't really expect the bookies to place us up there with the favourites. We're more likely to be attractive outsiders — and that suits us fine."

DAVID Pleat's decision to sign former Brighton skipper Brian Horton and to make him captain could well prove a crucial factor in his bid to steer Luton back into the First Division this season.

"I'm very impressed with David Pleat," said Luton's new £100,000 midfielder. "He's got a very good set up which is geared to the First Division. He's also got the players to keep them there, which is why I'm looking forward to helping him get them to promotion."

Horton is aware through having played against his new club in Brighton's Second Division days that they are more than capable of making the top flight before his two-year contract expires, even though Tony Grealish, Paul Price

HORTON USED TO DREAD PLAYING AGAINST LUTON!

and Alan West have all departed in the close season.

"I always used to dread playing against Luton because they were never an easy side to beat and always gave us a hard game.

"They also looked very good whenever I saw them on television last season, and if it hadn't been for their disappointing home record I'm sure they would have gone up."

Horton also feels that the responsibility of captaincy will give him the extra motivation which he felt he needed last season.

"I was captain at Port Vale and Brighton, and I have always

thrived on this as I've always enjoyed being closely involved. But at this stage of my career and after five tremendous seasons with Brighton I found I needed a spur which I'm sure I'll get from leading a team of new faces.

"My time at Brighton is something I shall never forget, and I can't thank them enough for all they did for me. That's why I'd hate to see them go down after all the work that went in to getting them up.

"I'd also love to play against them in the First Division, which would be the perfect way to end my playing career," Horton pointed out.



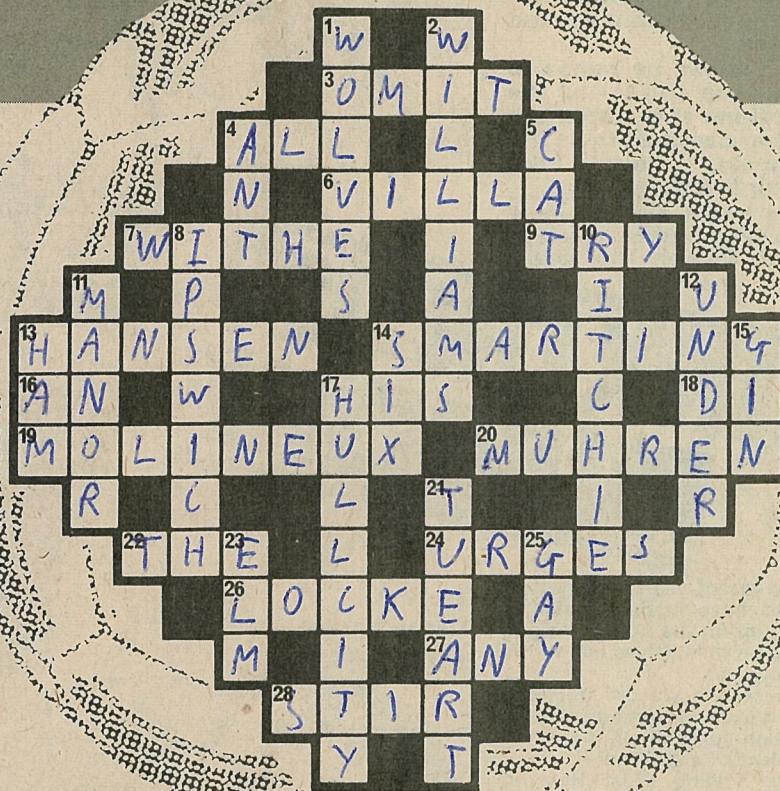
On the ball CROSSWORD

ACROSS:—

- (3) Leave out. (4)
(4) Bram --- Lane, home of Sheffield United. (3)
(6) He scored last season's F.A. Cup winner. (5)
(7) Peter ---, England striker. (5)
(9) A rugby football score. (3)
(13) Alan ---, Liverpool defender. (6)
(14) Giving stinging pain. (8)
(16) Dundee Utd play at T --- nadice Park. (2)
(17) Partick T --- tle play at Firhill. (3)
(18) Alfredo --- Stefano; European Footballer of the Year 1957 & 1959. (2)
(19) Ground of the club for whom Billy Wright was a famous player. (8)
(20) Arnold ---, Ipswich Town midfielder player. (6)
(22) Ro --- rham, current Third Division Champions. (3)
(24) Cheers on to make greater efforts. (5)
(26) Gary ---, Chelsea defender. (5)
(27) If Doncaster gives "TEN"; what does Clydebank give? (3)
(28) Excite or motivate. (4)

DOWN:—

- (1) Nickname of club in 19 Across. (6)
(2) Tommy --- of Leicester City. (8)
(4) If Southend, Ipswich & Wrexham make "USE"; what do Charlton, Mansfield & Peterborough make? (3)
(5) Tommy --- on Manchester City defender. (3)
(8) English First Division runners-up last season. (6)
(10) Andy ---, Brighton striker. (7)
(11) --- Road Ground of Oxford United. (5)
(12) S --- land are known as the Rokerites. (5)
(13) West --- play at Upton Park. (3)
(14) The number of times Blackburn Rovers have won the F.A. Cup. (3)
(15) Take three letters from Brighton to make a spirit. (3)
(17) The club from Boothferry Park. (4 & 4)
(21) Dennis ---, Manchester City striker. (6)
(23) --- Park; Reading's ground (3)
(25) --- Meadow; Shrewsbury Town's ground. (3)



ANSWERS
ON PAGE 41

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GIBSON FIREPOWER



LAST season Willie Gibson admitted: "I have gone as far as I can with Hearts. Possibly a move would now be the best thing for me."

That move didn't immediately materialise, but Partick Thistle manager Peter Cormack must have noted Gibson's words, for he swooped for the Tynecastle target man during the close season to sign him for a bargain £35,000.

Gibson, top marksman in six of his eight years with Hearts, is now looking forward to life at Firhill and says: "They are an ambitious Premier Division outfit and I was very impressed in my talks with Mr Cormack."

"He told me exactly what he is looking for from me as a Partick Thistle player and I am absolutely determined not to fail him."

"I enjoyed my years with Hearts, but as I stressed last season, I had come to the end of the road with them."

"Partick Thistle have offered me this fresh challenge and I'm sure I can live up to it."

"I won't be a failure through lack of effort, I can assure every Thistle fan of that. I will give them my all ... and then a little bit more."

Gibson certainly underlined his determination in his debut match against Highland League opposition Ross County in a pre-season friendly only four days after signing.

He walloped in a hat-trick in Thistle's 6-0 victory and, even taking into consideration the calibre of the opposition, it wasn't a bad start to his new career.

"I just hope they continue to flow as they did in that game," says Gibson. "It was just the start I needed ... now I hope to continue the trend throughout my new career at Firhill."

Delighted

Thistle manager Cormack is delighted with his signing.

"I've been looking for more firepower up front for some time now," he says. "Willie Gibson is a player I have had my eye on and I'm certain he will do a real job for this club."

"He is a good, honest professional and his goalscoring record with Hearts speaks for itself."

Gibson, who once scored a glorious hat-trick against Celtic and still ended up on the losing side, is a striker who wants to be known as a winner.

Firhill for thrills? Gibson will certainly provide that much needed commodity!

Campbell bounces back

COLIN Campbell's soccer career has taken so many twists and turns in the past four years that he must feel as though he has just stepped off a roller-coaster.

Four seasons ago he was the boy who promised so much, the youngster who was burdened with the striking role for Hibs in their memorable Scottish Cup Final marathon with Rangers.

After three hectic games Campbell had to be content with a runners-up medal after team-mate Arthur Duncan had scored the winning goal for Rangers in extra-time in the third encounter.

But he left Hampden that even-

ing to heartening applause, seemingly destined for top honours.

Two seasons later Campbell was on soccer's scrapheap ... given a free transfer by Willie Ormond, who had just taken over as Easter Road manager in place of the deposed Eddie Turnbull.

Dundee United manager Jim McLean was delighted to hear that Campbell had been handed a free transfer.

He moved immediately for Campbell and took him to Tannadice. Life, at last, looked like really taking off for the intelligent attacker.

"First team places were few and far between, though," says Campbell. "Simply, there were so many good players at the club."



"I played at the start of the season, but once Dave Dodds started producing the goods it was difficult to see Mr McLean changing a successful team and a winning pattern."

Airdrie manager Bobby Watson, building a stronger squad for his second season as a boss of a Top Ten outfit, had also noted the name of Campbell and he moved in just before the season's start to sign the player.

"I spent £10,000 on Colin. That may not sound like an awful lot of money, but I'll be expecting a big return," says Watson.

"I've got to sort my career out," says Campbell, "and Airdrie have given me that opportunity. Let's hope it's third club lucky."

Brogan's broken promise

LAST season John Brogan walked out on St Johnstone and declared: "I'll never kick another ball for them."

A proposed £100,000 deal to Hibs had fallen through and top goalscorer Brogan, once tipped to join Celtic, was not happy. He preferred to play golf on a Saturday rather than even support the Perth Saints.

Now, thankfully, all that has changed, as he says: "Alex Rennie impressed me greatly when he took over as manager. His drive and ambition got through to me."

"I was happy to sign on again, although it was agony when we missed out on promotion last season by just one point."

"We had to sit it out on the last day and hope that Dundee slipped up at Falkirk. Alas, they won, got

both points and went upstairs."

"Still, that's another lesson learned and that's what football is all about."

One thing that is fairly predictable, though, is the fact that, barring any unforeseen disasters, John Brogan is likely to be one of the First Division's most dangerous marksmen this season and that St Johnstone, emerging once again as a proud, solid club, won't be far away at the end of the day in the race for promotion.

"I'm making no promises," says the impressive Alex Rennie, a former disciple of Dundee United manager Jim McLean during his days as a player with the Tan-

nadice club.

"We'll just be taking things as they come, building all the way, looking no further forward than the next game."

"I know that's the correct way to look at football. There's no point in beating the bigger clubs if we are going to lose to smaller teams."

'Relax'

"We will respect everyone. Once you relax in this game and lose your grip you have had it. But we should be a better team for last season's experiences."

John Brogan, too, will be eager to make up on lost time. And that's got to be the worst news of the season so far for the First Division defences!



PLENTY OF GOALS—BUT FEW FANS



THE new Dutch season opened in style, with 34 goals in the nine First Division matches, an average of almost four per game, carrying on from last season when Holland topped the goals table.

The sad news is that attendances for the first day were down from 135,000 to 115,000. This, despite very little football on television because of a row about advertisement hoardings around the stadiums.

So why do the Dutch fans stay away? It seems as if most of all they're bored with the type of football being dished up. In the 70's, Ajax, Feyenoord and PSV could always be relied upon for top-class soccer, well supported by the likes of FC Twente and AZ '67.

Now, there are no super teams or super players. Half the national

team plays abroad. One of them, Ipswich's Frans Thijssen, says: "I'm not surprised by the decline in the national side's fortunes when I look at the state of club football in Holland."

"Too many sides aren't positive enough. The best players move away as soon as they can. Some big games attract only 4,000." Hooliganism is becoming an increasing problem, while it costs £2 just to stand at matches.

Ajax, one of the great names of European football, play another Euro great, Spurs, in the Cup-Winners' Cup in a couple of weeks. How many of the current Ajax team could you name?

In fact the new captain is Danish international Soren Lerby, while the best-known player is probably goalkeeper Piet Schrijvers (pictured left).

IN THE Asia/Oceania zone of the World Cup qualifiers, dates have now been set for the final play-offs involving China, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and New Zealand — with the top two qualifying for Spain.

Games will be spread from September 24th to December 19th, and it's interesting to note that both the meetings between China and Saudi Arabia will take place on a neutral ground at Kuala Lumpur rather than on a home-and-away basis.

Promotion? No thanks

FAMOUS French club Olympique Marseille has been brought back from the very edge of extinction thanks to financial help from the city authorities.

They've already produced £150,000 in hard cash, and the mayor of Marseille Gaston Defferre (who's also Minister of the Interior) has made dramatic appeals to the people of the city to come to the aid of the club.

It all seemed to produce results, because Marseille kicked off the season with over 15,000 season tickets sold.

Incidentally, the Second Division side must be one of the few teams in the world who don't want to be promoted to the First Division this season — a club spokesman remarked: "Promotion would be a financial catastrophe . . ."

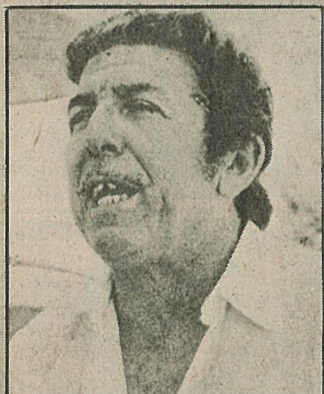
Belgian ace to strike?

WHEN the Belgian international midfielder Rene Van der Eycken was transferred from FC Bruges to the newly promoted Italian club Genoa FC he was promised that the club would find him, at their expense, a de-luxe first-class apartment for his family.

But the Genoa area is flooded with tourists in the summer months and Genoa cannot do more than leave him in an hotel.

"I must have my family with me," says Van der Eycken, "and if they do not keep their word I will not play in any competitive game until they take me away from 'camping' on my own in an hotel."

Stabbed in the back



RIVER PLATE'S decision to sign the legendary Alfredo di Stefano as new manager and to sack Angel Labruna is raising storms of controversy in Buenos Aires.

The 62-year-old Labruna (above) has led River to six titles in six years as manager, and on hearing of his dismissal commented: "I feel as if I've been stabbed in the back. I can't believe it."

Meanwhile di Stefano is all set to accept a contract that guarantees him around £75,000 a year, plus bonuses.

Ironically, di Stefano was sacked from his last club, Valencia, after differences with Mario Kempes.

Now, 15 months later, they're face to face again at River Plate.

WORLD WIDE



Compiled by **CHRIS DAVIES**

TRAINING PROBLEMS

AUSTRIA'S manager Karl Stotz recently made a grand tour of all the World Cup centres in Spain, making provisional reservations in a number of hotels.

"The big problem is," he remarked, "that there are practically no football pitches with grass where teams can train, and the hotels designated for the teams are mostly a long way from the centres."

THE MOST capped player of all time in Czechoslovakia is now Dukla striker Zdenek Nehoda, who gained his 77th cap against Iceland. First capped in 1971, Nehoda beats the old record of his Dukla boss Ladislav Novak.

News flashes

● **Valentin Stanescu**, manager of Rumania's international team, has also become manager of First Division Dynamo Bucharest.

● **Miljan Miljanic**, the Yugoslav national team manager, said in an interview published in several East European countries that football today is not very good to watch. He also said there is no really great team today, and that he did not think there was any automatic favourite to win the 1982 World Cup.

● **Hungary** are still exporting players. The latest to go is 30-year-old former international goalkeeper of Vasas

Budapest, Ferenc Meszaros, who has signed a two-year contract with Sporting Lisbon.

● **Roque Maspoli**, the manager of Uruguay's World Cup team, had his squad training together for 85 days before their World Cup qualifying matches. In this period, the Championship and all other official games were cancelled by the Uruguayan FA.

● **Two players** with Belgian clubs were in the Hungarian side beaten 3-1 by England and now half a dozen more Hungarians have signed for Belgian clubs. The Belgians seem to like their football with a

Breitner and Rummeniggetops

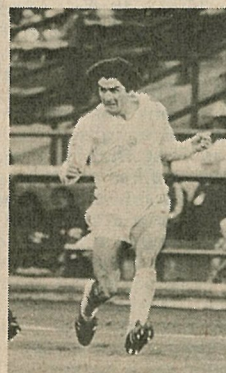
BAYERN MUNICH captain Paul Breitner has been elected West Germany's Footballer of the Year by an overwhelming majority. Breitner polled 453 votes, ahead of team-mate and European Footballer of the Year Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (213) and Hans-Peter Briegel (31).

Champions Bayern started the new Bundesliga season in Champion style, beating Leverkusen 6-2. Breitner and Rummenigge weighed in with two goals and one goal respectively.

● **Photo** shows Breitner, with his Footballer of the Year Award, and Rummenigge with his trophy for being top scorer in the Bundesliga last season.



paprika flavour or more likely it's the free transfers that appeal. SK Lierse have engaged Kocsis and Toth (below); Mucha has joined Waterschei, Waregem have signed Kozma and Harzany has been transferred to CS Bruges.



PLAYERS 'OWNED BY A BANK'

A NOVEL way to raise a loan was tried by the Fluminense club of Rio de Janeiro, who wanted to borrow approximately £150,000 from the Valbras Bank.

As a guarantee for the loan the club handed over the registration documents of their three leading players — Brazil stars Edevaldo and Edinho, plus centre-forward Claudio Adão.

Upon accepting the "guarantee" the bank then requested the Brazil F.A. (CBF) to stop any future transfer negotiations involving the players if not carried out by the bank themselves.

They also wished to be consulted on any alteration to the salaries of the players concerned.

CBF have refused to comply with any of the requests, as there was no "legal standing".

It was a strange sight the green and white scarfed Celtic supporter saw in the Rhijn Hotel in Rotterdam on the last night of July . . .

For there was Rangers manager John Greig and his right hand man Davie Provan chatting happily with Celtic boss Billy McNeill, his assistant John Clark and a group of the Parkhead players.

The occasion was the Feyenoord tournament in Holland when the Old Firm pooled their knowledge on Rangers' European Cup-Winners' Cup opponents Dukla Prague.

Celtic were playing in the competition . . . Greig was there to see the Czechoslovakians in action.

He saw them beat Anderlecht and left Provan behind to see the Final when Celtic beat Dukla 2-1.

Rivals

And the Ibrox boss, sure to see Celtic as deadly rivals as always this season, said: "The best thing of all about the visit was that Celtic reached the Final and then beat Dukla there."

"It gave us the chance to assess them against a team we knew inside out, as well as seeing them in an earlier match. It could not have worked out any better."

Allowing for that, Greig knows that this will be a tough hurdle for Rangers as they return to Europe after a year's absence.

He saw the Czechs — they have seven national players in the squad — beat Belgian Champions Anderlecht 3-1.

Afterwards he said: "Everyone in Britain keeps talking about how badly the Czech players travel. I

suppose it's because their national team has always done poorly at Hampden and in Wales, too.

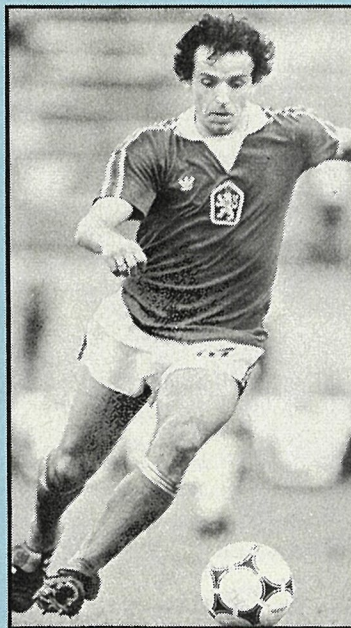
"But that team didn't look as if they had left anything at home. Anderlecht had scored in half a minute and if there was any chance that a team might be discouraged that was it — but Dukla came back magnificently. We have landed a very hard draw.

"They didn't just have the discipline that Iron Curtain countries seem to have. They had a lot of flair about their play, too.

"For me their best player was Jan Kozak the midfielder. Everything seemed to be played through him . . .

"But then they had Zdenek Nehoda up front who is a class player and the outside-right Ladislav Vizek, so there are several players who can create problems.

"What we have to do is pressure them a bit more than Anderlecht



Outside-right Ladislav Vizek could cause a lot of problems for Rangers.

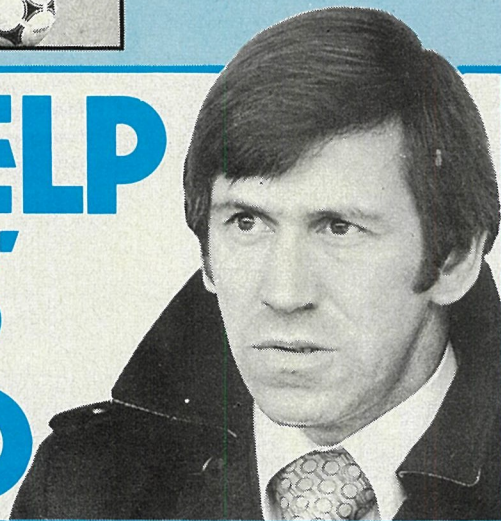
did. They won't like that. If we can harrass them a bit then they won't be as composed and there are one or two other weaknesses we might be able to exploit."

As they talked after that first game, McNeill agreed with his Old Firm counterpart, and when Provan saw Celtic win he knew his boss had been right.

Said the Rangers' second spy: "The manager thought that if people closed down on the Czechs then they wouldn't be able to play the way they did against Anderlecht. He was dead right.

"Celtic pushed people on top of their players and Davie Provan gave the left-back a bit of a chasing. Yet against Anderlecht that same player — Rada — had scored a goal and looked good.

CELTIC HELP RANGERS' EURO BID



Looking anxiously over his shoulder is Dukla star Jan Kozak, who has tasted defeat by a Glasgow side.



Rangers boss John Greig was helped in his mission by Old Firm rivals Celtic.

"He changed entirely when he was placed under pressure — and we have wingers who can do that."

And, as Greig added at home: "It was a double bonus for us. Because they have to go home knowing that they have already lost to a Scottish team.

"Knowing, too, that they weren't happy playing against our style of football. It is bound to make them more wary of us.

'Great Chance'

"The first leg is there and if we can keep things tight in that one then we must be in with a great chance of the next round. But we can't underestimate them."

McNeill agreed. "It's a hard one for Rangers because Dukla have so many good players," he stressed. "Their central defenders are good, they can attack well and their big fellow up front, Kriz, was voted player of the tournament. But we had seen them and we felt that we had to deny them space if we were to get anywhere. That's what we did and it paid off."

So, perhaps an Old Firm United — in off field planning at least — can help defeat the Czech Cup winners in the First Round of the European competition!

SHEFFIELD WED.



CLUB SPOTLIGHT

SHEFFIELD Wednesday were one of the many teams in the running for promotion from Division Two last season, yet manager Jack Charlton never felt comfortable about going up. Forever the realist, he knew his side simply wasn't ready for the First Division.

"Another season in the Second for us to mature will do us more good in the long term," he says. "I was also a little disappointed with the attitude of some of the players at times. I'm

not saying they were lazy or unprofessional, just that getting into the first team isn't enough. Once there, you have to put all your effort into winning, and until we develop that extra will to win then all the skill in the world won't win us promotion."

Wednesday's downfall last season was their poor away record, and if they can find the determination Charlton is looking for on their travels then The Owls should be back in Division One next year.

Terry Curran attracts most of the headlines, but Charlton singles out centre-forward Andy McCulloch for special praise.

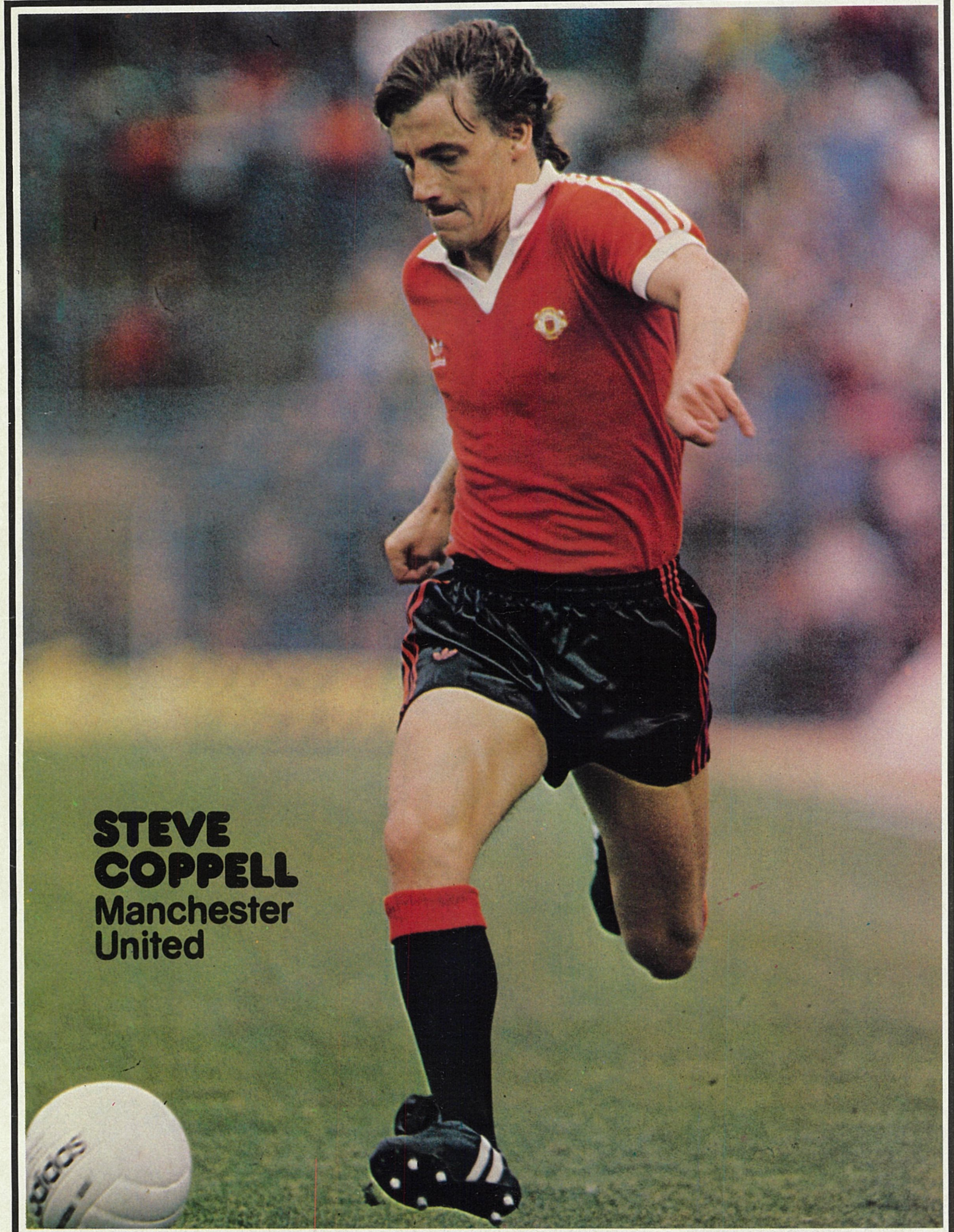
"He's been the best possible example to the players. Andy's one of the best pros I've come across, never shirking responsibilities."

Charlton steered Middlesbrough to promotion from Division Two seven years ago and now he is set for a repeat with Sheffield Wednesday.

HONOURS

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BACK ROW (left to right): Andy McCulloch, Ian Mellor, Dave Redfern, Bob Bolder, Brian Cox, John Pearson, David Grant.
MIDDLE ROW: Frank Blunstone (coach), Maurice Setters (coach), Jim Holton, Mark Smith, Gary Magson, Gavin Oliver, Mel Stenland, Trevor Matthews, Ray Blackhall, Peter Shirliff, Tony Toms (coach), John Honey (physio).
FRONT ROW: Kevin Taylor, Gordon Owen, Terry Curran, Brian Hornsby, Ante Mirocevic, Jack Charlton (manager), Denis Leman, Charlie Williamson, Paul Shirliff, Jeff King, Gary Bannister.

A full-page photograph of Steve Coppell, a professional footballer, in action. He is wearing a red Manchester United jersey with white stripes on the sleeves, black shorts with red stripes, and black socks with a red band. He is running on a green football pitch, looking down at a white football at his feet. The background is a blurred crowd of spectators in a stadium.

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'Lawrenson will improve Liverpool'



Says Eire boss Eoin Hand



THE man with the most miserable medal collection at Anfield — that unenviable title must surely belong to recent £900,000 signing Mark Lawrenson.

The cultured Republic of Ireland central defender who signed from Brighton shortly before the start of the season explains: "I have never won a medal as a professional footballer.

"All I have to show are a couple of souvenirs from my school days."

But the ambitious Lawrenson knows all that is likely to change this season with the most successful club in British soccer.

"When I finish my career, I know I'll ask myself what I have achieved. The question won't be how big my bank balance is, but what did I win," he says. "It's because I want to be part of a Liverpool side which will continue to win major trophies that I'm delighted to be joining the best team in Europe."

Lawrenson's arrival at Anfield presents Liverpool boss Bob Paisley with an embarrassment of defensive riches.

With Phil Thompson and Alan Hansen already established in the centre of the defence, Lawrenson may have to accept a new role in order to achieve his ambitions — possibly at left-back or in a defensive midfield capacity.

One man who has no doubts as to his ability to fulfil those new duties is Lawrenson's Republic of Ireland manager Eoin Hand.

"He's cool, has good skill on the ground for a big man and, like all players of true class, he can play just about anywhere.

"I believe his best position is at the back, and I think he's happiest there. But if Liverpool use him as a defensive midfield man he'll do the job magnificently," Hand confidently predicts.

"He can win the ball with his speed can turn defence into attack in a flash.

"He's only played in midfield for the Republic once, but he was tremendous, possibly it was his best performance for us. It was a

year ago against Holland when he scored the winner.

"If it wasn't for the fact that he is such a brilliant central defender, particularly in partnership with David O'Leary, I wouldn't have any doubts whatsoever about playing him in midfield.

"It is hard to think of many players who could actually improve the Liverpool team, but Lawrenson is definitely one."

Lawrenson was understandably flattered that other big names such as Arsenal and Manchester United were also keen to sign him, but he still admits to a few regrets at leaving Brighton.

"The last four years have been tremendously happy and a great experience," he continues. "Brighton looked after me very well and I've made a lot of friends down there.

'Decision'

"I just hope that everyone at the club understands my decision to go. It wasn't easy, and I feel the best thing I can do now is try to forget all about my four years at the Goldstone and to look upon this move as a completely new start in life."

In fact, he almost signed for Liverpool from Preston before Brighton stepped in.

"Bob Paisley offered £70,000 for me but Harry Catterick, who was the Preston manager at the time, and the board of directors decided it wasn't enough."

"Then Brighton came in with a £100,000 bid and that was it."

Lawrenson leaves Brighton after just two years of a lucrative ten-year contract.

But he has willingly given up that long term security for the promise of some more immediate dividends in the shape of major honours.

As chairman John Smith commented after securing the club's record deal: "We are only interested in winners and Mark Lawrenson is just that kind of player."



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| SUKAN/REUSCH 115 | Wet/Dry | White neoprene foam rubber | Green polyurethane | White grooved foam rubber | Y.S.M.L. | £7.95 |
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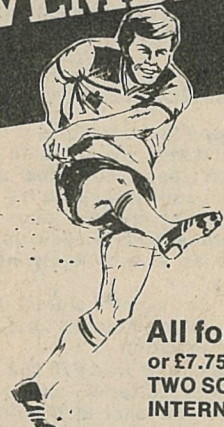
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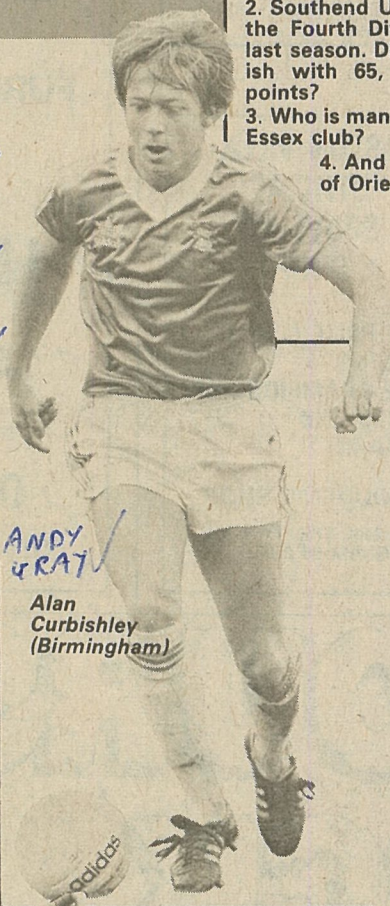
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TAKE A BREAK IT'S

QUIZ TIME

STRIKERS

- Which one of these players — Malcolm Poskett (Watford), Bob Hatton (Sheffield United) or Alan Curbishley (Birmingham City) — does not normally play as a striker? **CURBISHLEY**
- Ipswich Town and England number nine Paul Mariner began his League career with which Third Division club? **PLYMOUTH**
- Did Dave Bennett appear for Manchester City in both F.A. Cup Final games against Tottenham at Wembley last season? **YES**
- Charlton Athletic striker Derek Hales has played games for three other clubs... can you name them? **DERBY**
- Who scored the winning goal for Wolves in the 1980 League Cup Final against Nottingham Forest? **ANDY GRATT**



Alan Curbishley (Birmingham)

Spot the clubs

- Which three clubs were relegated from the First Division at the end of the 1979-80 season?
- A London club appeared in two consecutive F.A. Cup Finals during the 1940's. Was it Charlton Athletic, Brentford or Millwall?
- The Buddies appear in the Scottish Premier Division. By what name are they better known?
- If Neville Southall saved a penalty from Andy Harrow which English and Scottish clubs would be in action?
- Mervyn Day (Orient) and Graham Paddon (Norwich City) were once team-mates with which club?

Graham Paddon (Norwich)

PICTURE PUZZLE

Study this action photograph, taken during Orient's clash with Southend during a League Group Cup-tie this season, and see if you can answer the following questions about the game and the two clubs.

- Can you identify the Orient striker in the light strip?
- Southend United won the Fourth Division title last season. Did they finish with 65, 66 or 67 points?
- Who is manager of the Essex club?
- And the boss of Orient?



Ian Rush (Liverpool)

TRUE OR FALSE?

- Ajax, the famous Dutch side, have won the European Cup on four occasions. **FL**
- Until February, 1970, Swansea City were known as Swansea Town. **TV**
- Liverpool's Ian Rush began his League career with Chesterfield. **FL**
- Frank Worthington topped the First Division goalscoring list with 24 goals for Bolton Wanderers in 1978-79. **TL**
- Alloa have never won the Scottish Second Division Championship. **FL**

JUMBLED DEFENDERS

Rearrange the jumbled letters to find the name of some of Britain's top defenders and their clubs.

- UOGDUEVOIRG (ENAEBDER)
- NKEcTGNMUHA (TNSAOLVALI)
- DDIVA'YAORLE (SLAANRE)
- EIDVAESAYH (OOTMNR)
- KMRAWOLENNRSRA (VLOLOIRPE)
- MTOYMSRNB (TCIELC)
- VDDIAERNAY (EENDDUUDITEN)
- OJELLGGRAAEH (IINBMHAGMR)
- UPALIERPC (EAOTNHTMT)
- NFAKRYRGA (EESLDNDUEIT)

ANSWERS

SPOT THE CLUBS: 1. Bristol City, 2. Charlton, 3. St Mirren, 4. Everton against Aberdeen, 5. Tommy Burns (Celtic), 6. David Narey (Dundee United), 7. Paul Price (Tottenham), 8. Joe Gallager (Birmingham), 9. Paul Price (Tottenham), 10. Frank Gray (Leeds). TRUE OR FALSE? 1. False — they have won three times, 2. True, 3. False — he started with Chester, 4. True, 5. False — they won it in 1921-22.

ON THE BALL ANSWERS

ACROSS: — (3) Omot, (4) All, (6) Villa, (7) Withe, (9) Try, (13) Hansen, (14) Smarting, (16) An, (17) His, (18) Di, (19) Molineux, (20) Muhren, (22) The, (24) Urges, (26) Locke, (27) Any, (28) Stir.

DOWN: — (1) Wolves, (2) Williams, (4) Ant, (5) Cat, (8) Ipswich, (10) Ritchie, (11) Manor, (12) Under, (13) Ham, (14) Six, (15) Gin, (17) Hull City, (21) Tueart, (23) Elm, (25) Gay.

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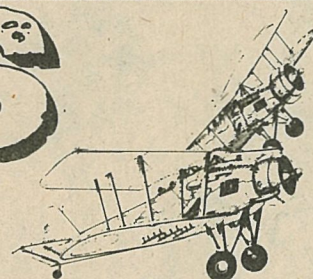
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'Glad Villa aren't tipped for the title'

THERE'S no way Aston Villa will retain the Championship! Last season's success was a fluke . . . a one-off affair.

That seems to be the general consensus of opinion in the game.

But I'm glad the critics and other players don't rate Villa's chances this season. Being tipped as title favourites would have put even more pressure on the team.

All at Villa Park are conscious that this is probably the most vital season in the club's history.

If we are to establish ourselves as one of the country's leading clubs and prove last season's triumph was no flash in the pan we've just got to do well.

One title win doesn't mean we're a great team. Villa have got to consolidate our success and go on to reach even greater heights.

One thing Villa are sure of . . . it's going to be a very tough campaign for us. Playing the current Champions will be all the motivation opponents will need to raise their game.

Although Ron Saunders has signed midfielder Andy Blair from Coventry, he is still looking for new players. He's more aware than anyone that the squad needs strengthening.

Liverpool's fabulous record over the past 15 years is due mainly to their depth of talent. Villa must strive to match their first team squad if we are to retain titles and win European Cups.

The boss hasn't really spoken about winning anything this season.

All he said was he expected us to start out with the same positive attitude as last season, when we took five out of the first six points.

That formed a solid base for the rest of the season. This year it will be even more important to kick-off in style with three points for a win at stake.

Even though Ron Saunders doesn't believe in setting targets, the players obviously feel very confident of at least maintaining a real Championship challenge.

Whatever happens, Villa won't change their entertaining style. We will attack while retaining a certain amount of discipline at the back.



GARY SHAW
Soccer as I see it



Villa have the knack of stopping opponents from playing for the first half an hour. We can close teams down and catch them on the counter-attack.

I realise clubs will be more aware of our tactics second time around, but they've still got to contend with the likes of Peter Withe, Tony Morley, Gordon Cowans, Dennis Morfimer, Des Bremner and Kenny Swain.

I'm also hoping for a good run in the European Cup. Winning it would be fantastic, but realistically I think Villa probably lack the experience necessary to achieve glory at our first attempt.

Most people wrote off Nottingham Forest as one season wonders after they won the title for the first time in 1977-78. But they went on to European Cup triumph the following year.

Apart from Villa, Liverpool are also competing in the European Cup this season as holders. What a great Final that would be.

Even without Ray Clemence, Liverpool will obviously be the team everyone must beat this season.

With Ray gone a lot will depend on Bruce Grobbelaar. He's a

mystery to me, but I don't think Liverpool would have paid £250,000 for him and allowed a 'keeper with Clem's class to join Spurs if they hadn't done their homework.

Manchester United, despite Ron Atkinson's rebuilding and reshuffles to the backroom staff, could emerge as the surprise team in the Championship stakes.

Few people are forecasting honours for United, but with new signings John Gidman and Frank Stapleton they could well provide a few shocks.

Naturally Ipswich will also be there again. They've such a strong, sound team it won't be too much of a shock if they take the title.

This Saturday (September 5th) we travel to London to meet Spurs.

But even with new signings Ray Clemence and Paul Price I believe Tottenham will lack the necessary consistency and strength in defence to get among the major honours again this season.

It won't be the first time this season we've met of course. Spurs held Villa to a 2-2 draw at Wembley in the Charity Shield last month, and will be looking to go one better this time. I missed my Wembley debut because of injury, and that was a big disappointment. But I hope to make up for it with a couple of goals on Saturday.

Brian Wilson
Gary Shaw

Manchester United (above, white shirt) could emerge as the First Division's surprise packet, according to Gary Shaw (seen with the Championship trophy).



WHO WILL BE THE

There is little doubt that the young star who came from nowhere to shake the soccer world last season was Aston Villa striker Gary Shaw.

Now Shaw is an established and highly-respected First Division player. So who will take his place as the shooting star of the 1981-82 season?

GARY Shaw, a local lad who used to cheer his Villa heroes from the terraces, has had a meteoric rise to football stardom. Last season he received a car for being Robinson's Barley Water Young Player of the Year. Denis Law, who knows a thing or two about goalscorers, tips him to become the best striker in Europe. But this season there are quite a few candidates queueing to replace him as the new soccer sensation.

Certainly there are two on Merseyside whose emerging talents suggest they could go right to the top.

Paul Lodge of Everton came into the side last March when their ace midfielder player Asa Hartford was suspended. Not many visiting footballers like playing at Anfield, so imagine what it must be like having to make your debut there in a Merseyside derby! Twenty-year-old Lodge did just that, and came

through the experience with flying colours.

Howard Kendall, his manager at Goodison Park, says of Lodge: "He has a tremendous chance of establishing himself in the first team this season."

"He plays on the left side of midfield, yet he has two great feet. The lad wants to become a top class player and I believe he will. His only weakness at the moment is that he doesn't score enough goals, but we're working on that."

Liverpool also have a player they consider could achieve greatness in the game. 19-year-old Ronnie Whelan, a Republic of Ireland Under-21 international, scored on his debut against Stoke last April, but was immediately dropped from the side. Nevertheless he won praise from his manager Bob Paisley: "He showed a lot of composure for one so young."

Across the Pennines there is a young centre-forward with such power and purpose that he has already been likened in his play to Malcolm Macdonald. His name: Aidan Butterworth — his club, Leeds United, and manager Allan Clarke is hoping that he will strike up an effective partnership with Peter Barnes, the £930,000 close season signing from West Bromwich Albion.

Reuben Agboola has already made a good impression with Southampton.

On the South coast Southampton have a team full of experienced players. Yet all that could change this season as three youngsters challenge for permanent places alongside Kevin Keegan and company.

Striker Steve Moran delighted fans at The Dell last season when he was given a chance in the senior side, and the Saints have two other forwards who might do equally well this campaign.

They are Andy Rogers and David Puckett. Puckett, born in Southampton, was impressive in the six matches he played last season and Rogers arrived at The Dell last February after some sharpshooting displays for non-League Hampton.

The third man, Reuben Agboola, made his debut at Old Trafford last

season and Saints' manager Lawrie McMenemy was well satisfied with the way in which this 19-year-old defender fitted into the team.

"It's always a big moment for a lad when he comes into the first team but I had no doubts about putting him in — he has a lot of ability," reports McMenemy.

Along the coast at Brighton they have a young centre-half who could become a first team regular now that their Eire international defender Mark Lawrenson has joined Liverpool. He is Tony Vessey, a compact and sure-tackling young man whom new manager Mike Bailey is hoping will form a formidable alliance with his other centre-back Steve Foster.

Capable

Black footballers continue to make a massive impact and John Bond, the Manchester City chief, believes 18-year-old goalkeeper Alex Williams is another capable of succeeding in the world's most competitive League.

Bond points out that Alex has a tremendous teacher in Joe Corrigan. "They both work so hard at their game and Alex is learning all the time. If I wasn't sure that he would make the grade, I would not have sold Keith MacRae to Portland Timbers. He's a very determined young man and a nice guy, too."

Tottenham have spent a great deal of money in their search for honours, yet they have a player on their doorstep who could save them a lot of cash.

Twenty-year-old Giorgio Mazzoni is a solid-looking centre-back who played three games for the North London club

THE LEADING CANDIDATES

TONY VESSEY (Brighton): 6ft 1in central defender. Joined Brighton August 1978, turning professional a year later. Debut v Coventry in March. Age 19.

DAVID PUCKETT (Southampton): Striker signed from school in August 1977, turning professional a year later. Debut v. Everton in March. Age 20.

REUBEN AGBOOLA (Southampton): 19-year-old defender. Joined in July 1978, signed professional in April 1980. Debut v Manchester United in November. London-born, Nigerian father.

STEVE WHITTON (Coventry): Midfield player, born in East Ham. Joined September 1978, signed professional September 1979. Debut v Tottenham same month. Age 20.

IAN HANDYSIDES (Birmingham): Midfield player. Two England Youth caps. Signed apprentice June 1979, turning professional September 1979. Debut v Tottenham same month. Age 20.

JOHN TEASDALE (Wolverhampton): Striker from Inverness. Debut v Sunderland in April. Scored five goals for Wolves in an international youth competition in Holland in the summer. Age 18.

last season. He gave up a job as an orders clerk with a firm of builders in Enfield in the hope of building a future with Spurs. All the signs are that he'll achieve his ambition.

Birmingham City got £1m when they sold Trevor Francis to Nottingham Forest and they reckon they have got another jewel on their staff in Ian



NEW GARY SHAW?

ANDY ROGERS (Southampton): 24-year-old striker. Joined in February 1980 from non-League Hampton. Debut v Ipswich April 1980.

PAUL LODGE (Everton): Midfield player, who grew up as a Liverpool fan, so fitting that full debut at Anfield on March 21. Age 20.

KEVIN STEGGLES (Ipswich): Full-back. Debut v St.-Etienne in the second leg of the Quarter-Final of the UEFA Cup on March 18. Age 20.

AIDAN BUTTERWORTH (Leeds): Striker from York. Debut v Coventry in April. Would not sign until he had completed his A-levels. Age 18.

GIORGIO MAZZON (Tottenham): Centre-half. Debut v Birmingham in January. Born London with Italian parents. Age 20 (21 on Sept 4).

RONNIE WHELAN (Liverpool): Republic of Ireland Under-21 international. Midfield player. Debut v Stoke in April, when he scored in 3-0 win. Dublin-born. Moved to Liverpool from Home Farm. Age 19.

ALEX WILLIAMS (Manchester City): 6ft 2in coloured goalkeeper. Debut v West Bromwich Albion in March. Also played in last match of season v Liverpool. Age 18.

Handysides, 18, whose mature midfield work has already gained him England Youth honours.

Jim Smith, the City manager, is sensibly not rushing him to the front but, in four first team appearances, Handysides has done sufficient to suggest he will soon receive an extended run.

Wolves have two established



Ian Handysides (above) could be a ready-made replacement for Trevor Francis at Birmingham. Coventry's Steve Whitton (top) is the latest in a long line of young talent to emerge at Highfield Road.

Liverpool's Ronnie Whelan scores on his debut against Stoke (left). Ipswich full-back Kevin Steggles (right) was called up to replace Mick Mills in Europe last season.

strikers in Andy Gray and John Richards, but they have another potentially exciting goalscorer waiting in the wings.

He is 18-year-old John Teasdale, who showed exceptional sharpness when taking part in a close-season youth tournament in the Netherlands.

Manager John Barnwell knows that should either Gray or Richards be sidelined by injury, he can call upon young Teasdale with every confidence.

Coventry City, who have produced a host of fine youngsters during the past few years, think they have found another one in Steve Whitton. His hard-running midfield play not only generates anxiety among opponents but motivates colleagues and he could become a regular member of the Sky Blues' League side now that Andy Blair has moved to Aston Villa.

Not many players make their debut against European opposition but it happened to Kevin Steggles, a 20-year-old full-back with Ipswich Town.

He got this dream-like chance against St.-Etienne because of an injury to Mick Mills and, as Bobby Robson said: "He played as if he had been in the team for several years."

All these youngsters have the credentials to become the big names of 1981-82. Their clubs and thousands of fans will be watching their progress with intense interest.

For Joe Bolton leaving Sunderland was 'LIKE LOSING PART OF MY BODY'

WHEN Middlesbrough boss Bobby Murdoch signed Joe Bolton from Sunderland during the summer he broke up an association between the player and the Roker club that had seemed unbreakable.

For 11 seasons Bolton's fierce tackling and tenacity at full-back made him a favourite of the fans — indeed, he had the reputation of being the hardest man in the Sunderland side.

Now, with a spell of over a decade at Roker behind him, Bolton plans to give his brand of dedicated service to a club which is in the process of replacing departed stars.

He says: "Craig Johnston, Mark Proctor, David Armstrong and Bosco Jankovic have all left Boro. But the team still has potential and I think I've something to offer."

Yet determined as Bolton is to make his mark at Ayresome, he confesses that leaving Sunderland was a wrench.

"After idolising the club since my schooldays I feel that part of my body has been cut off, and my early days at Middlesbrough seemed strange and unreal follow-

ing my years at Roker.

"But what helped me was the fact that my parting of the ways with Sunderland didn't come about suddenly. I had reached a stage in my career where I was stale and in danger of stagnating.

"Almost two years earlier I suffered a loss of form that was baffling to me. I just couldn't put my game together no matter how hard I tried and I became a bit depressed.

"It all followed several seasons in which I'd been a consistent first team performer and I couldn't complain when Ken Knighton dropped me from the team.

'Routine'

"Eventually I realised that what I needed was a change of scene, the opportunity to start elsewhere. The daily training routine became a chore and that was the moment I knew I had to be moving on after my contract expired.

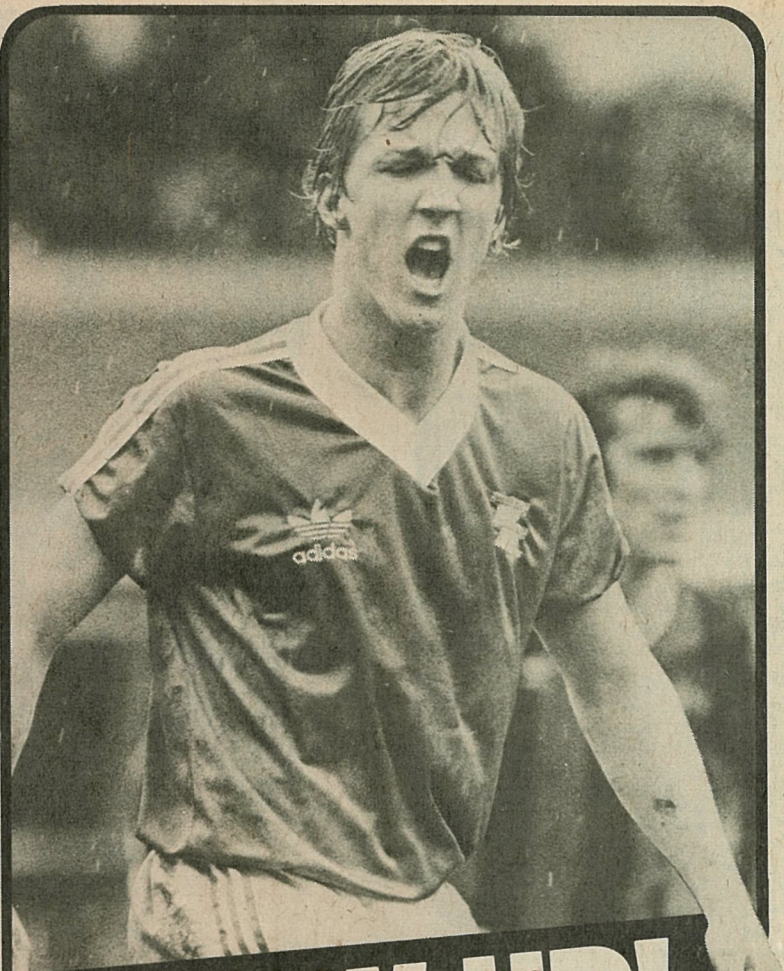
But in spite of his later disenchantment at Roker he is grateful for the expertise he picked up from two ex-Sunderland stars, Bobby Moncur and Bryan Robson.

"Bobby's prompting on the field helped me tremendously," he recalled. "And in trips away from home, conversations I had with him and Bryan made me more aware of what was going on around me on the field. I owe them both a lot."

Ask Joe his ambition and his answer is simply — to be happy and healthy.

Certainly an in form Bolton would make Boro fans very happy in the future.

Bolton (left) learned a lot from former Sunderland team-mate Bryan Robson (stripes).



GROW UP!

Gemmill's message to bad boy Dennis



FIVE harsh words from Birmingham City captain Archie Gemmill have convinced Mark Dennis that it is time to change his professional attitude.

England Under-21 full-back Dennis spent most of last season under a cloud of despair. A knee injury restricted him to only 21 First Division appearances, but he still found time to get sent-off against Nottingham Forest and collect three further bookings.

City manager, Jim Smith, fined the 20-year-old defender one week's wages and no doubt told him, man to man, that his confrontations with officials had to stop.

But when team-mate and skipper Gemmill announced: "It's time you grew up," Dennis decided to take his advice.

He admitted: "I have done exactly what Archie advised. Towards the end of last season I made up my mind that I would not open my mouth to referees this season.

"I believe I have matured. I am also a married man now so I shall be showing a different temperament. I shall not get into any trouble, neither with officials nor Jim Smith."

This pledge seems all Dennis needs to make a real impact on the

First Division in 1981-82. Undoubtedly talented, he has already attracted the interest of England manager Ron Greenwood and played for the Under 21's.

And to show he means what he says, Dennis started training one week earlier than his team-mates.

"I had trouble with the ligaments in my right knee. I missed half the League programme and I suppose I was only fit in half of the games I did play," he said.

"I gave the leg a complete rest for five weeks once the season ended. And on holiday in France I exercised it swimming and went jogging around a local track.

"I'll be in great shape for the start of the season, and to be honest I can't wait. City did very well last season, but I suppose Aston Villa's League Championship triumph overshadowed us. That's understandable."

And on the behaviour front...

"I mean what I say. That is all behind me now. I shall be doing everything in my power to stay on the right side of officials. Just wait and see."

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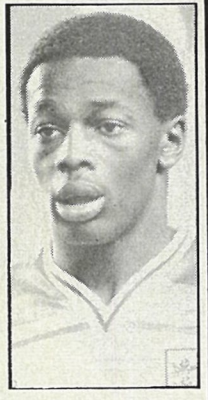
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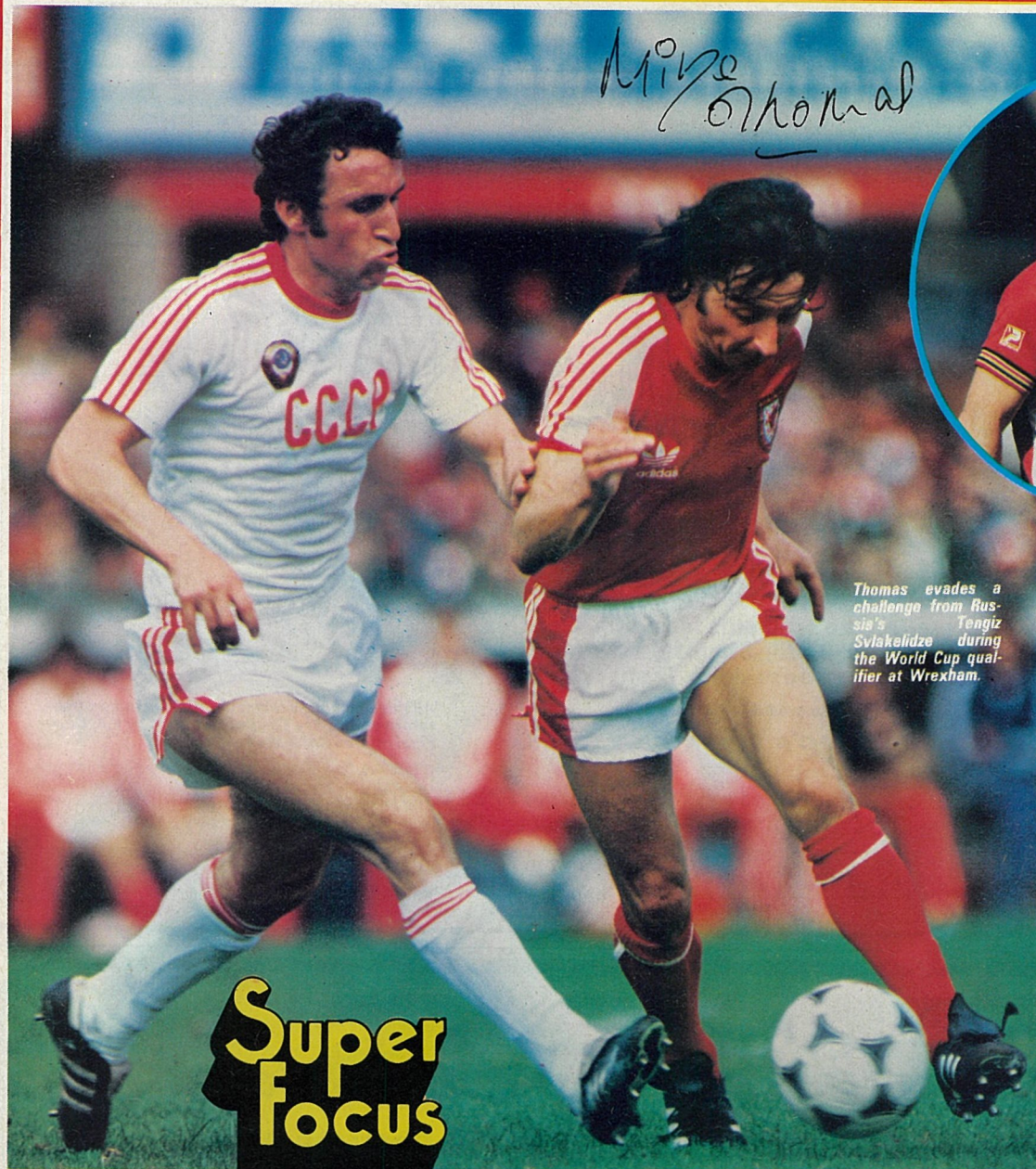
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Mickey Thomas

Thomas evades a challenge from Russia's Tengiz Svkladze during the World Cup qualifier at Wrexham.



Alan Ball

**Super
Focus**

MICKEY THOMAS

Everton and Wales

FULL NAME: Michael Thomas
BIRTHPLACE: Mochdre, N. Wales
BIRTHDATE: July 7, 1954
HEIGHT: 5ft 6ins
WEIGHT: 10st 3lbs
MARRIED: Yes, to Debbie
CHILDREN: Aaron, 15 months
CAR: Capri Injection
PREVIOUS CLUBS: Wrexham, Man. Utd.
JOB OR TRADE BEFORE TURNING PRO: Joined Wrexham straight from school
NICKNAME: Mickey
FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER: Liverpool Daily Post
FAVOURITE PLAYER: Glenn Hoddle
PLAYERS FOR THE FUTURE: Kevin Ratcliffe and Andy Ritchie
FAVOURITE OTHER TEAM:

Wrexham
FOOTBALL HERO OF CHILDHOOD: Alan Ball
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORT: Tennis
OTHER SPORTS PERSON YOU MOST ADMIRE: Bjorn Borg
YOUR BEST EVER ALL-TIME XI: Banks, Kaltz, Beckenbauer, Charlton, Wilson, Ball, Hoddle, Cruyff, Pele, Law, Best.
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH: Playing for United in the 1979 F.A. Cup Final v Arsenal
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Not signing for Everton sooner
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: I don't want him to know
FRIENDLIEST AWAY FANS: Aston Villa
BEST STADIUM PLAYED IN: Wembley

FAVOURITE FOOD AND DRINK: Cornflakes and tea
MISCELLANEOUS LIKES . . .
DISLIKES: Playing with my son Aaron . . . Hangers on
FAVOURITE SINGER: Bryan Ferry
FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS: Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Marbella
FAVOURITE TV SHOW: Benny Hill
BEST FILM SEEN RECENTLY: Texas Chainsaw Massacre
FAVOURITE ACTIVITY ON DAY OFF: Going to the beach with Debbie and Aaron, provided the weather is nice
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: My dad Reggie, my PE teacher Richard Dodd and former Wrexham boss John Neal
SUPERSTITIONS: Put my boots on three times before the match
PRE-MATCH MEAL: Cornflakes
INTERNATIONAL HONOURS: Welsh Youth, Under-21, Under-23 and full caps
PERSONAL AMBITION: To win the First Division with Everton
IF NOT A PLAYER WHAT JOB WOULD YOU DO? A pilot
CAREER AFTER PLAYING: Haven't thought about it
WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET? Pope John Paul



Tottenham's Glenn Hoddle, Thomas' favourite player.

SHOOT!